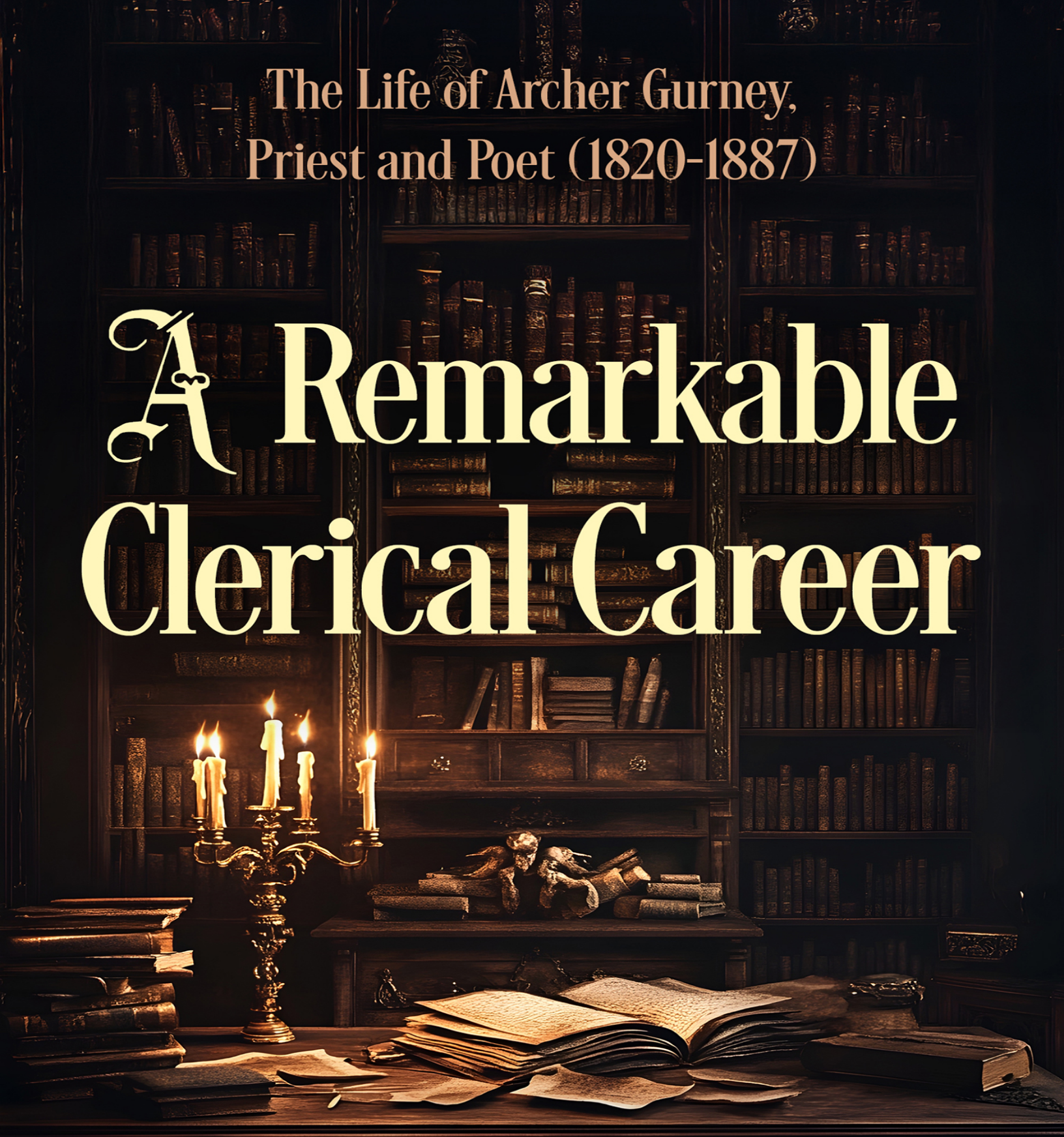
The Life of Archer Gurney, Priest and Poet (1820-1887)

# A Remarkable Clerical Career



DAVID GURNEY

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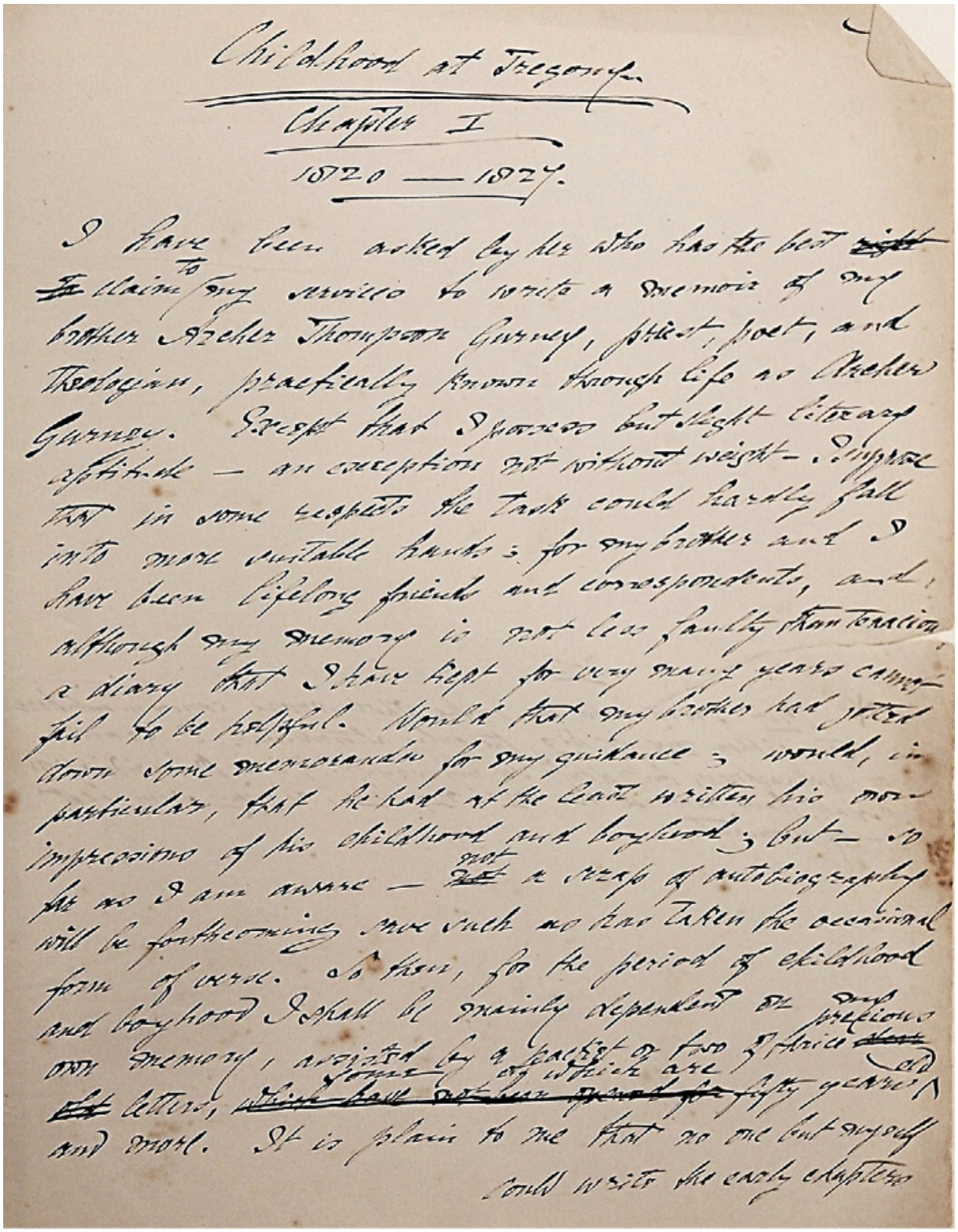

Childhood at Tregony.

Chapter I

1820 — 1827.

I have been asked by her who has the best claim to my services to write a Memoir of my brother Archer Thompson Gurney, priest, poet, and Theologian, practically known through life as Archer Gurney. Except that I possess but slight literary aptitude — an exception not without weight — I suppose that in some respects the task could hardly fall into more suitable hands: for my brother and I have been lifelong friends and correspondents, and, although my memory is not less faulty than formerly a diary that I have kept for very many years came-fail to be helpful. Would that my brother had jotted down some memoranda for my guidance; would, in particular, that he had at the least written his impressions of his childhood and boyhood; but — so far as I am aware — not a scrap of autobiography will be forthcoming save such as have taken the occasional form of verse. So then, for the period of childhood and boyhood I shall be mainly dependent on my own memory, assisted by a packet of [illegible] letters, some of which are [illegible] and many. It is plain to me that no one but myself could write the early chapters

The first page of the *Memoir* (British Library Add. Ms 81597).

Portrait of Archer Gurney by Daffinger. Vienna, around 1840. Courtesy of Mrs Joan Gurney

Photograph of Archer Gurney by Lock and Whitfield (Jones 1903, plate VI, no. 6).

Photograph of Augustus Gurney (Gurney family collection).

# Contents

Acknowledgements

Preface

Chapter 1 Augustus, Archer and Family
Augustus
Archer
Elise
The Children
Gerald
Vivian Vernon
Archer Hugh
Archer Evelyn
Sybella

Chapter 2 The Manuscript
The Manuscript
Lost and Found

Chapter 3 Summary and Discussion of ***The Memoir***
The Face of an Angel
Childhood in Cornwall; 1820-1834 (Chapters I-V)
Schooldays at Helston; 1832-33 (Chapters III-IV)
The Flight to the Continent; 1833-1843 (Chapters V-XVIII)
Neuweid 1833-35 (Chapter V)
Weimar, Dresden, Lucerne and Nancy; 1836-38 (Chapters VII-X)
Austria and asphalt; 1838 (Chapter XI)

Vienna and Grillparzer; 1838-1841 (Chapter XIII)
Return to England; 1841-42 (Chapter XIV)
***Faust***; 1842 (Chapter XV)
Karl Simrock; 1842-43 (Chapters XVI-XVIII)
***King Charles the First***; 1844-46 (Chapters XIX-XX)
Parliament, the Lake District and a Visit to Wordsworth; 1846 (Chapter XXII)
Howard Glover; 1847-48 (Chapter XXIII)
The Chartist Scare 1848 (Chapter XXIII)
In Hiding in Dorset 1848-49 (Chapters XXIV-XXV)
Ordination and Exeter; 1849-1851 (Chapter XXVI)
The Soho Years; 1851-53 (Chapter XXVII)
Archer and Tennyson; 1854-55 (Chapter XXVIII)
Grillparzer; 1855-56 (Chapter XXXI)
The Final Chapter; 1855 (Chapter XXXII)

Chapter 4 The Rest of Archer's Life
Buckingham; 1854-58
Paris; 1858-1870
England and Wales; 1870-1887
Death and burial; 1887

Chapter 5 ***Memoir of the Reverend Archer Gurney*** by Augustus Gurney
Chapter I Childhood at Tregony 1820-1827
Chapter II Childhood at Tregony in Continuation 1827 – 1830
Chapter III Helstone School 1832-1833
Chapter IV Helstone School in Continuation 1832-1833
Chapter V We go Abroad. Neuwied. 1833-1835
Chapter VI
Chapter VIII Dresden. En route. 1837
Chapter IX Lucerne 1837

Chapter X Nancy. De Deranger. Victor Hugo. 1837-1838
Chapter XI Paris Episode. The Collége d'Henri Quatre. Nancy again. A sad parting. St Nicholas and A Record from Life. 1838
Chapter XII Vienna. A lawsuit. Grillparzer 1838-1841
Chapter XIII Pisa. The Baths of Lucca. A Happy Meeting 1838-1841
Chapter XIV Vienna in continuation. Archer goes to England. Zacharias Werner. 1841-1842
Chapter XV A little more about Vienna. Betty Paoli. Faust, Part II - En Route. 1842
Chapter XVI The Water-cure. Ursula. Wiesbaden. We arrive at Bonn. 1842-1843
Chapter XVII Bonn. Percival. Karl Simrock. A Father's loss. 1843
Chapter XVIII Königswinter. The Fools of Hope. We return to England. 1843
Chapter XIX Rock Vale. Love's Legends. King Charles the First. 1844-1845
Chapter XX King Charles I in Continuation 1845
Chapter XXI Political Aspirations. The West Riding. A Death in the family. 1846
Chapter XXII The Lake District. Wordsworth. Songs of the Lakes. 1846
Chapter XXIII ~~Friends of youth~~. Early friendships. Howard Glover and Attila. Sims Reeves. Ernest Jones and the Chartist scare.1847-1848
Chapter XXIV Unlimited liability. Whitchurch Canonicorum. The Rev. James Bandinel his reminiscences ~~and Whitchurch Canonicorum~~. Majorian 1848-1849
Chapter XXV Majorian in continuation 1848-1849
Chapter XXVI Ordination. Exeter 1849-1851
Chapter XXVII St. Mary's, Crown Street, Soho. 'Spring' 1851-1853
Chapter XXVIII The Transcendentalists. Maud. Correspondence. 1854-5
Chapter XXIX Songs of the Present 1853-1855
Chapter XXX Home Correspondence 1855

Chapter XXXI Supplementary Correspondence. Grillparzer. Tennyson. Cobden. The Ode of Peace 1855
Chapter XXXII Iphigenia At Delphi 1855
Appendix 1: Gurney Family Tree
Appendix 2: Timeline
Appendix 3: Archer's Publications
Appendix 4: Archer's correspondents
Appendix 5: Hymn: Come, Ye Lofty
Appendix 6. A page in Archer's hand from ***Alboin***
(British Library Add MS 42994 (7), f. 214)
Bibliography

# Acknowledgements

My interest in family history was encouraged by two of my uncles, the late Revd Canon Richmond Gurney and the late Gerald Gurney. Without their investigations into the history and genealogy of our particular (Cornish) branch of the Gurney family, it is unlikely that the manuscript of the *Memoir of the Reverend Archer Gurney* by his brother Augustus Gurney would have survived.

Other individuals who have helped me in my research include Russell Burdekin, Franklin Grigg (Tregony), Catherine Horrell (*née* Gurney), Patricia Leach (*née* Gurney), Mr and Mrs Mark Painter (Little Hereford), Professor John Scott CBE, Isabel Syded (Honorary Archivist, The Anglican Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham) and Philippa Taney (Pusey House Library, Oxford).

The name of the person who created the typescript from the original manuscript for my uncle, the late Gerald Gurney, is unfortunately lost. Without their painstaking and accurate work, with remarkably few words not deciphered, the conversion into pdfs and then from pdfs to editable Word documents would not have been possible. If they ever chance to read this, I am most grateful for their Herculean efforts.

Institutions who have facilitated my research include the British Library and its Manuscript Reading Room and Library Manuscripts Reference Service, the British Newspaper Archive, Internet Archive, the National Library of Scotland, The Norfolk Heritage Centre in the Millennium Library, Norwich, the Norfolk Record Office, Suffolk Libraries (Beccles), Suffolk Archives, the University of East Anglia Library and the University of Cambridge Library Munby Rare Books Reading Room.

# Preface

I remember meeting my great uncle Harold Manby Gurney at my grandmother's house in Dedham, Essex in 1964. That evening he invited all the family who were able to attend to a fine meal to celebrate his 90th birthday at Dedham Vale Hotel, as was his custom. I didn't appreciate then that I was in the presence of someone who in turn had known my great-granduncle Revd Archer Thompson Gurney (1820-1887), priest, theologian, preacher, lecturer, politician, protectionist, poet, essayist, pamphleteer, composer, librettist, hymnist, linguist, translator and Germanophile. How I wish I had asked Harold to tell me all about his uncle Archer.

Many decades later I inherited a manuscript written by Archer's brother and my great grandfather, Revd Augustus William Gurney, which was an unfinished *Memoir* of Archer's life between the years 1820 and 1855. It had been discovered in a cupboard in a rectory somewhere in Norfolk where the Rector was said to have gone mad. Who that Rector was, where it was and how it got there are complete mysteries.

The *Memoir* includes Archer's childhood in Cornwall, the family's flight to and travels on the continent between 1833 and 1843 and his work amongst the poor in Soho. It includes many extracts from his published and unpublished literary works, comprising around one-third of the *Memoir*'s content. Unpublished works by Archer in the *Memoir* include six of his *Songs of the Lakes* of which there was 'enough to fill a small volume' (Chapter XXII) and extracts from his theological drama *Majorian* (Chapters XXIV-XXV). There is an account of his visit to Wordsworth, and his correspondence with literary figures of the day, most notably the Austrian poet and playwright Franz Grillparzer.

Archer wrote and published prolifically. The *Dictionary of National Biography* lists twenty-two works including six volumes of poems, *Faust*

*Part the Second* (after Goethe), *King Charles the First*, *Iphigenia at Delphi*, *The Transcendentalists* and *Words of Faith and Cheer*.

These and other works had mixed receptions, and Archer and his family were certain that the lack of recognition of Archer as a poet during his lifetime was a very great injustice. The *Memoir* is therefore an attempt by Augustus, undoubtedly one of Archer's greatest admirers, to make a record in his final months of his recently deceased brother's life for posterity.

It has not been an aim of this book to provide any sort of detailed critique of Archer's extensive literary output. Others reading this may wish to take on that challenge. The many and in some cases lengthy extracts chosen by Augustus from published and unpublished works are more than sufficient for readers to make up their own minds on this matter, but the fact that Archer remains virtually unknown as a Victorian poet today rather speaks for itself.

However, I hope that in some small way this brings Augustus' work to a conclusion, two hundred years after his birth, and places on record aspects of Archer's life which an obituary appropriately described as a 'Remarkable Clerical Career.'

*David Gurney*
*May 2025*

# Chapter 1
# Augustus, Archer and Family

Before moving on to the subject of this book, Archer Gurney (1820-1887), it seems appropriate to consider the *Memoir*'s author and Archer's younger brother Augustus William Gurney (1825-1888). Then, after Archer himself, his wife Elise and their children. The reader might find it helpful to refer to the Gurney family tree at this point (Appendix 1).

## Augustus

Augustus was Archer's younger brother by five years and he seems to have led a relatively quiet and uncomplicated life. Like Archer he went to Helston Grammar and the Moravian school in Neuweid then, while his brother was in Vienna, to a school in Paris. He received his BA from Oxford (Lincoln College) in 1849 and his MA in 1853.

He was ordained Deacon in the Diocese of Hereford in 1850 and appointed assistant curate at Huntspill, Somerset (1850-51). He was curate at Trinity Church, Windsor and Eton in 1860 and at St Mary's, Watford (1860-64). He then held livings at Christ Church, Wribbenhall, Worcester (Rector 1864-78) and finally at St Mary Magdalene's, Little Hereford with Ashford Carbonell in Herefordshire (Rector 1878-88).

We do not know if Augustus was high church, low church or somewhere in between. Two of his sons were ordained; Revd Archer George Harptree was 'middle of the road', while Revd 'Father' Wilfred Nicolas was very high church.

The publication of memoirs or biographies of the more eminent members of the clergy during the 19th century was far from uncommon, so Augustus was treading a well-beaten path in making a record of his brother's life. He

seems to have published just one other work, *The Home Life of Jesus of Nazareth & c*. (1871). This was described as 'A volume to be welcomed.' He is also credited with 'two series of sermons for Epiphany and Lent - apt enough for the occasions, but scarcely above the ordinary sermon standard.' We read in the *Memoir* that Augustus wrote more than a thousand sermons, some of which were inspired by Archer (Chapter XXVI). In return Augustus made 'valuable suggestions' regarding sermons to Archer.

As he wrote the *Memoir* Augustus clearly had before him a variety of sources above and beyond his own diaries and memory. It is thought that in 1954 Wilfred Gurney had access to his father Augustus' diaries when he prepared a summary of the *Memoir* with some *addenda*, but alas these do not survive. Within the family Wilfred was usually known as Bill, and arguably his greatest claim to fame was his position as Chaplain to Bristol Town Football Club.

Augustus also refers to sources and letters that would have been invaluable to him had they survived. He certainly had letters from the 1830s onwards, one of their brother Richard's diaries, their mother Catherine's diaries, several of Archer's works in manuscript and the original versions of many published works. He tells us that others are lost or destroyed.

It is thought that Archer might not have intended to publish some of his translations and works including those by Grillparzer (Little 1972, 634), so perhaps towards the end of his life he disposed of many of his manuscripts some of which were said to be torn or undecipherable. Probably the only substantial document in Archer's hand to survive is the manuscript of *Alboin* (1845) in the British Library (see below and Appendix 6).

When Archer died in 1887 he was survived by his wife Elise and four of their children, all of whom might have contributed to Augustus' work from their own diaries and recollections. Archer makes no reference to them doing that, so the picture emerges of Augustus working alone in his study in the rectory at Little Hereford, also known as Rectory Cottage and now The Old Rectory.

The wills of Archer, Augustus and Augustus' wife Mary make no mention of Archer's papers which one assumes must have been extensive. What happened to them on his death is unknown. When Archer died at Bath he had been living at 7 Keble Road, Oxford, now the University's Department of Engineering Science's Oxford e-Research Centre. No doubt the house included a study, but we will never know if it was full of his papers or if they had already been disposed of or were destroyed soon after his death. Little (1972) searched widely for further Gurney archive and manuscripts relating to Grillparzer, but sadly found none. We must therefore assume that whatever was extant after Archer's death to help Augustus write the *Memoir* no longer survives.

An obituary for Augustus in *The Tenbury Wells Advertiser* 4 September 1888 describes how, after a service at Little Hereford, his coffin was put on the 11:58 train from Easton Court station (Little Hereford) to Wribbenhall (around twenty miles) where his remains were interred. Apart from family, many friends and the choirs of both parishes were in attendance.

# Archer

Archer Thompson Gurney was known throughout his life as Archer Gurney and that was how he preferred to be known. He had been given the personal names Archer Thompson in an attempt to bring about a reconciliation between the Gurney and Thompson families. The Thompsons had objected to his father Richard as a suitor for his mother Catherine, then a nineteen-year-old heiress.

The Gurney family were well established in Cornwall by the time of Archer's birth on Saturday 15 July 1820. Archer's probable great great grandfather, Revd John Gurney (1680-1764), appears to have moved to Cornwall from London and was appointed Vicar of St Merryn in 1708. It is not certain that he was related to the Gurneys of Tregony but it is very likely. If so his son Samuel (1713-1796) was Master of Tregony School, Rector of Warleggon and Vicar of Colan. Samuel's son Richard (1748-

1825), hereafter Revd Richard, was Rector of Tregony between 1795 and 1825, and Revd Richard's son, also Richard (1790-1843), was Archer's and Augustus' father (see again Appendix 1 for the family tree from Revd Richard to the present day).

Richard Gurney was born in 1790. After his childhood in Tregony he studied law and was admitted to the Inner Temple. In 1812 at the age of twenty-two he was appointed Vice-Warden of the Stannaries of Devon, a position in which he tried cases involving mining disputes. He received an income of £50 a year until in 1817 his corrupt behaviour led to the loss of that position. In Chapter XVII we learn that Richard was not particularly religious unlike his father Revd Richard and Archer.

Richard had a reputation for 'high play' and was considered to be extravagant. He had variously been tried for perjury, charged with assault, held in Marshalsea Prison for six months and in 1818 he was outlawed for debt at the famous trial of Mary Ann Tocker. Mary Ann Tocker (1778-1853) was the first woman in Cornwall to be tried for Libel (against Richard Gurney) and to act as her own advocate in a British court of law.

In 1818 Richard fled the country to the continent (Paris) for the first time having been as good as disowned by the family. The Thompsons' judgement of Richard's character had proved to be right (see Chapter V), but nevertheless Archer Thompson and Catherine were married in 1819.

Richard's family background and legal position made the family at least middle if not upper class. Having attended a few court levées in England, he had a court suit and during the ten years on the continent he was able to pose as a member of the Royal Court. By doing so he could gain entry to the minor courts of Europe.

Archer was born in 1820, followed by Frances (Fanny) in 1822, Augustus in 1825 and Richard (Dick) in 1828. Both Frances and Richard died young, the latter from consumption at the age of eighteen.

The name Archer in the Gurney family has its origins in the Archers of Umberslade Hall, Warks, through the Croft and Thompson families

(Barfield, S., 1901). Its use as a first name appears in the 17th century; for example, Sir Archer Croft, 2nd Baronet (1683-1753), who was given the surname of his mother and wife of Sir Herbert Croft, 1st Baronet, Elizabeth Archer.

It remains in use in the Gurney family to this day, including the author's father Antony Archer Gurney (b. 1926) and, before him, the author's grandfather, Revd Archer George Harptree Gurney (1869-1952), another priest and poet (Gurney 1941). It is quite likely that he would have met his uncle Archer, and he may well have been aware of or even seen some of Archer's publications and manuscripts.

Augustus tells us that his and his brother's grandfather, Revd Richard, baptised Archer within an hour or two of his birth on 15 July 1820. There is an entry in the register of St Cuby's church for that date. Curiously, the register for Paul Parish Church for 23 August 1820 has a second record of Archer's baptism, with the following note appended by the vicar on 3 July 1857. 'According to testimony which I have received from Mrs Catherine Harriot Gurney, this party, her son, was baptised by the names Archer Thompson and not Arthur Thompson as here erroneously inserted.'

Much of Archer's life was spent in pursuit of recognition as a poet, but this was an aspiration that was unfulfilled. His output was prolific, with many works published and many others never published and now lost. His main publisher was Longman, although for reasons unknown Augustus did not turn to them first when he was looking for a publisher for the *Memoir* (see below). Unpublished works included in the Memoir are, *inter alia*, six of Archer's *Lake Songs* and large parts of his drama *Majorian*.

Augustus wrote 'The success of other men, as contrasted with his own failures, was to be a trial to him through life.' Archer remains 'a minor but recognised literary talent of mid-nineteenth century English literature' (Little 1972, 631), although Archer was included in the volume *Men of the Time*, containing memoirs of eminent living persons and the 'aristocracy of intellect' (Thompson 1879, 473).

The work of Archer's that proved to be most popular in his lifetime was much more about religion than poetry, and his *Words of Faith and Cheer* (1874) is an important work which will be considered in greater detail later.

Archer was acknowledged widely as a man of letters, corresponding with many of his more successful and prominent contemporaries in the world of literature. Augustus recounts that 'My brother was the recipient of hundreds of interesting letters from distinguished men and women… a few only are extant.' Those who are known either from the *Memoir* or other sources to have corresponded with Archer include Matthew Arnold, Robert Browning, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, William Gladstone, Leigh Hunt, Charles Kingsley, Felix Mendelssohn and Alfred Lord Tennyson (see Appendix 4). Charles Dickens, replying to Archer in 1857, wrote 'Your letter has afforded me the greatest pleasure' (*Free Library of Philapelphia* acc. no. 90-539). In the same year, Archer had written to George Eliot regarding her *Mr Gilfil's Love Story*. She had written on Archer's letter 'This letter he [her husband] brought up to me at Jersey after reading it, saying with intense joy 'Her fame is beginning''. It was the first letter she had received as a creative author (Cross 1885, 450-2).

The most significant letters to survive, but unfortunately only as transcripts within the *Memoir*, are those to and from Franz Grillparzer and Tennyson. Archer's lack of success as a poet was something he had in common with Grillparzer, who wrote 'I am half forgotten in my native country, and passed by, though not yet equalled.', words which were also applicable to Archer. Tennyson unusually opened himself up to Archer, even commenting on his own work. There is also in the *Memoir* an account of a rather uneventful meeting with an elderly and slightly grumpy Wordsworth which is of interest.

In 1888 Archer is described as having 'a varied and peculiar history', as 'an interesting character' and, given the frequency of his moves from one place to another, someone whose whereabouts were 'subject to natural uncertainty' (Duffield 1888, 87-88). Except for the twelve years in Paris

(1858-70) Archer seems to have been constantly on the move between his ordination in 1849 and retirement in 1883. He was a lowly-paid curate with no job security or it seems any prospect of preferment, despite his well-to-do background. In 1843 it was said that 'there is no situation so precarious as that of the unbeneficed clergy' (Anon 1843). That is not to say that Archer was not ambitious; in 1867 he was possibly being considered as the third Bishop of Gibraltar and in 1882 he was showing interest in the Bishopric of Northern Europe. There was a plan for a post overseeing the Anglican Church in France, Germany, Norway, Holland, Denmark and Russia, and Archer was 'ready …. If only £1000 can be raised for him' (*Liverpool Mercury* 24 March 1882). That plan never came to anything.

It is interesting to compare Archer's career with that of the Revd Dr John Hunt (1827-1907) (Yeandle 2021). Hunt was a struggling curate, well-educated, a graduate (though not from Oxbridge), naturally intelligent, a prolific writer on theology and religion and a committed Protestant. It took Hunt no fewer than twenty-three years to secure his first permanent living at the age of fifty-one.

Another near-contemporary was Revd Benjamin Armstrong (1817-1890), most of whose life was spent as the Vicar of Dereham, Norfolk (Wade Martins 2018). Like Archer he had travelled abroad (Wade Martins 2018, x, 198) and he was sympathetic to the Oxford Movement (*ibid.* 22). He visited and worshipped at churches on visits to London including St Paul's, Knightsbridge (*ibid.* 102), where Archer and Elise married in 1860.

Augustus' *Memoir* and other sources paint a picture of Archer as a man of unswerving Christian faith. He was high church and aligned most closely with the Anglo-Catholic tradition but, at the same time, very firmly opposed to subservience to or merger with Rome. Some of his sermons are explicitly anti-Catholic and the Latin or Roman Church is to Archer 'a foreign communion' (Gurney 1858d, 26). His views were as extreme High Church as it was possible to be within the context of the Anglican Church, approving of candles on the altar, incense, singing and vestments. Archer

also made it very clear that ‘Catholic’ and ‘Roman Catholic’ were not synonymous and he chose his use of these terms carefully (*The Spectator* 10 January 1863).

This was also a time when being an outspoken Anglo-Catholic was often to suffer the displeasure of some bishops and patrons (Reed 1988, 376). As a priest Archer was a popular and charismatic preacher, a great comforter to the dying, a socialist and a generous, diligent, and compassionate missionary worker amongst the sick and the poor, often at his own expense. These were all traits to be found amongst the High Church clergy.

Augustus sums up his brother’s life in these words: ‘Though he little foresaw it, he himself was to prove hope’s fool throughout life; for he never ceased to hope that he might attain to some great sphere of usefulness in the English Church, and to poetic fame.’ On his memorial, Archer is described as ‘Priest, Poet, Theologian’, and the order of these words, no doubt carefully chosen by his widow Elise and brother Augustus, may be significant.

A recent biography neatly sums up Archer’s life in these words: -

> ‘In his lifetime Gurney was a figure of some prominence, and his prolific output collectively served to consolidate his status as one of the period’s recognised (if very minor) men of letters. In his personal relations Gurney was liked by such notable literary figures as the British poet and critic Matthew Arnold and English poet Robert Browning. After criticising the poems of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Gurney fell out of the poet’s favour, although the two later reconciled to some degree. Gurney’s social position and connections to some of the most prominent figures of the day guaranteed an audience for his work, yet its largely poor critical reception ensured that his fame was fleeting. Although his hymn [*Christ is Risen, Christ is Risen*] remains in use, his more literary and philosophical efforts have been all but forgotten’ (*ProQuest Biographies* 2015).

# Elise

Elise does not get any mention in the *Memoir* for the very good reason that the manuscript ends prematurely in 1855 and her marriage to Archer was in 1860.

She was the third child and only surviving daughter of a London banker, John Atholl Hammet(t) (1802-1837) and Sybella, *née* Daniel (1804-1874). Her place of birth in 1833 is recorded as France (British Citizen). John worked for the private bank of Esdaile, Hammet & Esdaile from 1819, becoming a partner in 1825. The Hammet family relinquished their interest in the bank in the early 1830s (*NatWest Group Archives* 2020) and it collapsed in 1837, the year in which both William Esdaile and John Atholl Hammet died. The Hammets may have been resident in Paris for some time as when John died in 1837 he was buried there. If the family remained in the city after that, Archer and Elise may have met in or soon after 1858 when Archer arrived there.

We know very little about Elise despite her being a published author in her own right, albeit sometimes under the pseudonym Gerard Leigh (see below). As she lived until 1907 she must have been known to Augustus' sons Archer George Harptree (b. 1860), Harold Manby (b. 1874) and Wilfred Nicholas (b.1876). Unfortunately, no diaries survive that might have made mention of her.

In 1881 Elise may have contributed to a volume of word and number games, card games, directions for making toys and crafts, magic tricks, and other activities for all ages (Anon 1881). This seems a little unlikely and it has not been possible to find any definitive proof.

In 1886 Elise, Vivian and Evelyn are all at the wedding in Oxford of a Miss [Margaret Mary] Spencer to the Middle Temple barrister Octavius Homes Beatty. Both Vivian and Evelyn are erroneously listed in the media report as 'Miss' (*Oxford Journal* 17 July 1886).

We know that after Archer's death Elise visited Augustus at the Rectory at Little Hereford. In 1889 she is listed as Mrs Archer Gurney with Gerald,

Evelyn, and ‘Miss Gurney’ [Sybella] in the *Fashionable Visitors List* at Eastbourne, staying with Lady Norah Hodgson at 1 Grand Parade. Lady Norah [Honoria] Hodgson, *née* Boyle, was the daughter of the 9th Earl of Cork and Ottery. In the same year Elise was one of the signatories to the *London and National Society for Women’s Service, Central Committee’s Declaration in favour of Women’s Suffrage*. Of the two thousand or so who signed, Elise was one of only seventy-five names listed in newspaper reports. She also attended the wedding of Miss Ethel Melville Lee to Revd Arthur Downes in Oxford. We can surmise from these reports that Elise remained well-connected after Archer’s death.

In 1891 Elise was living with Archer Evelyn, Sybella and her spinster aunt Eleanor Daniel in Hanover Square, London. In 1893 she attended an event at the Royal Holloway College for Women in Egham where Sybella had studied. In 1894 she attended the funeral in Bath of a Mrs Weld of Oxford, widow of Mr C. R. Weld (d. 1869), barrister and travel writer. Two years later in 1896 Elise was a beneficiary of Eleanor’s will and, through Eleanor, she also inherited a portion of the estate of her aunt Anne.

The only occasion on which her words other than her poems are recorded are at the inquest into the tragic suicide of her son Archer Evelyn in 1895. This took place at the family home in Oxford so Elise was a key witness. She is asked a series of questions but her answers reveal nothing about her character, nor do they shed much light on her son’s mental health.

Elise’s death notices and the second edition of her poems (Gurney, E.E., 1907) all use the name Elise Eleanor Gurney so that was probably her preference. At least three editions of her poems were published, but the 1907 edition runs to only thirty-two pages out of the original 108 by ‘Gerard Leigh.’

Elise clearly had literary talents of her own and her poetry’s classical references and use of Latin suggest that her education may well have matched Archer’s. The first edition of her poems was published in the same year as her marriage to Archer in 1860. Under the pseudonym Gerard Leigh

(Leigh 1860) it was very favourably reviewed. The volume includes a huge (153 Spenserian stanzas) poem *Colonna* dated 1854-55, a tale about Sicilian love, jealousy and revenge. One reviewer said ‘We are rarely so attracted by the first production of a virgin muse as we have been by Mr Leigh’s. In this instance it is the poetry of passion that attracts us.’

Notices of *Colonna* first appeared in May 1860. In August that year advertisements for Archer’s *Poems* and Leigh’s *Colonna*, both ‘just published’, are strategically placed side by side. This was just six days after Archer and Elise had married.

There is also a very heartfelt and personal poem entitled ‘The Priest’s Wife’, which is omitted from the 1907 edition. If this refers to Archer, as it surely must, Elise describes herself as his ‘fellow worker’ and wrote that it was ‘The love of God, - of pureness, beauty, truth, O it was this that won me! not thy sighs’ and you ‘showed thyself to me just as thou art, A shining soul for Heaven’s starry ranks.’ Finally, ‘Where thou art not, there is no dance to me. All songs, and splendours live within thine eyes!’ They sound like a devoted couple with the shared interest of literature and poetry. Another poem, Love Song, is dated ‘28 MA 60’, and seems to be a late addition (Leigh 1860, 108).

Two further extracts may shed some light on the relationship between Archer and Elise; ‘To read with thee at night some antique page of saint or martyr….’ and ‘I wished for a voice of equal melody, that I might also sing the joys I knew’ (Leigh 1860, 100, 101).

Elise ‘entered into peace’ in July 1907 and was buried as Eliza Eleanor Hammett Gurney at St Mary the Virgin, Hambleden, Henley-on-Thames, Bucks.

# The Children

Having considered Augustus, Archer and Elise and before we move on to the Memoir itself, this seems to be the most appropriate place to include brief accounts of Archer’s and Elise’s children. Between 1862 and 1870

Archer and Elise had five children; Gerald 1862, Archer Hugh 1863, Vivian Vernon 1865, Archer Evelyn 1867 (often just called Evelyn) and Sybella 1870 named after Elise's mother. The birthplace of all five was recorded as Paris, France. We know almost nothing about life in the Gurney household. Gerald and Sybella were clearly well-educated and went on to have interesting and in Sybella's case significant careers.

In his summary of the Memoir Wilfred Gurney (1954) says that Archer's children, his cousins, were four in number, three sons and one daughter. He may have omitted Archer Hugh because he had died in infancy or he may not even have known about him.

Gerald was the last of Archer's and Elise's five children to die, all of them without issue. With his death in 1939 that branch of the Gurney family tree came to an end. Of his brother Augustus' ten offspring only Archer George Harptree had children to continue that line, including Revd Richmond, Antony Archer and Gerald Nicholas.

# Gerald

Gerald (1862-1939) was Archer and Elise's first child. After Merton College Oxford he embarked upon a career as an actor in 1886, including the Bensonian Shakespeare Players and the Howard and Wyndham Players. He was also actor manager at The Globe Theatre in Plymouth. He was described as 'a gifted and masterful young actor' and gets eight mentions in an 1891 yearbook of the stage (Howard 1891). There is a photograph of Gerald as Artemis in *The Three Musketeers* at the Globe Theatre London on 22 October 1898 (*The Bristol Magpie* 13 June 1903). He continued to work in London theatres until at least 1903, mainly appearing in comedies.

Gerald married Dorothy Frances Blomfield at St Mary's, Bryanstone Square, London in 1897 and the following year they trod the boards together at a charity event. Dorothy is best known for her hymn 'O Perfect Love' which she wrote in 1883 (Monk 1889, No. 578) either for her sister Katherine's wedding at Ambleside (*Dictionary of Cumbrian Biography*;

https://www.cumbrianlives.org.uk accessed 13.04.2025) or for her own wedding to a fiancée who died before the marriage took place (Pollock 1971). Her well-known poem 'God's Garden' was first inscribed in Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's visitors' book at Hammerfield, Penshurst and published in 1913 (Gurney 1913).

Gerald was ordained into the Church of England in 1904 and as priest in 1905, becoming curate at St James the Less, Plymouth. At that time it was 'the bastion of Anglo-Catholicism in Plymouth' (Gurney, D., 1911). No doubt Gerald's time as an actor made the Anglo-Catholic tradition and its ceremonies attractive to him. When Gerald assisted at the wedding of his cousin Wilfred Gurney in 1919 he is referred to as 'Father Gerald Gurney.' Gerald left the Church of England in 1919 and he and Dorothy were received into the Catholic Church at St Michael's Abbey, Farnborough 'to the shock of their friends and relatives' (Ashworth 2019).

Once Gerald had left the stage there is very little information about his life as a priest between 1904 and 1919 or the following two decades in London. Gerald and Dorothy lived at 21 Denbigh Road W11, a fine three-storey semi-detached mid-Victorian property.

Between 1919 and 1939 Gerald is occasionally mentioned in the media, in contrast to his time on the stage, attending one wedding, two musical events and five requiem masses. In 1888 he was one of the chief mourners at the funeral of his uncle Augustus. In 1926 Gerald addressed a meeting of the Catholic Stage Guild at the National Catholic Congress in Manchester.

Dorothy published several volumes (Gurney, G., 1901; Gurney, D.F.B., 1913; Gurney, D.F., 1915) and two volumes of her work were published after her death (Gurney, D., 1933; Gurney, D.F., 1933).

It is said that Gerald's and Dorothy's later years spent in London 'were somewhat of a struggle' (Appleyard 1990, 22) but the reasons for this are unknown. On his death Gerald's estate was valued at £32,000; that is the equivalent of around £2m today, so any difficulties were probably not financial. Five years after her death it was said of Dorothy 'I never thought

a good woman could be so witty, so amusing and so intelligent' (*Catholic Herald* 19 November 1937).

It is known that Gerald was keenly interested in history, so if the manuscript of the *Memoir* came into his hands at some stage he had reason enough to keep it safe. We also know from his obituaries that between 1919 and 1939 Gerald was involved in the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom (1998), the aims of which were to enrol Catholics in the work of conversion, the restoration of lapsed Catholics to the church and prayer for the forgotten dead. He was also president of the Interval Club (for Catholic artists in the theatre) and the Converts' Aid Society which supported non-Catholic clergy who had joined the Catholic Church as Gerald himself had done. He worked every day in the office of the Guild until three weeks before his death after a short illness 'fortified by the rites of the Church.' He left bequests to the Converts' Aid Society and the Roman Catholic Convent of Our Lady of Sion at Chepstow Villas in Notting Hill for the education of young girls. The convent was next door but one to Gerald's and Dorothy's home at 21 Denbigh Road. Gerald and Dorothy are both buried in St Mary's Catholic Cemetery, Kensal Green.

# Vivian Vernon

Vivian Vernon was born in 1865 and died in 1935. Wilfred Gurney records that he was born 'in 1870 on board the last train that left Paris during the Franco-Prussian War 'and was never normal and spent the last years of his life with a keeper attendant in a Cornish village.' Both the 1871 and 1881 censuses have Vivian's birth in or around 1865 and Sybella's in or around 1870, so it appears that Wilfred may have been confused over which child was born when and where. In some records Vivian is erroneously recorded as female.

In 1871 he was with the family in Broadwater (Sussex), and in 1881 he was of no occupation and living with Archer at Rhayader. When Elise died in 1907 he was cared for by Sybella, lodging in Boldre, Hants with the

family of Harry Yeo, a professional singer (Scott 2013, 224). By 1911 he was ‘of unsound mind’ and living at Mevagissey (Cornwall), single, of no occupation and a boarder with an attendant in the household of a medical practitioner and public vaccinator Charles Grier. He seems to have lived there until his death in 1935. His funeral was a low-key affair with ‘No mourning or flowers, by request’ at Trewinney Cemetery.

# Archer Hugh

Archer Hugh (b. 1863) died age just six months in March 1864 and was buried in France (*Morning Advertiser* 28 March 1864).

# Archer Evelyn

Archer Evelyn was born in 1867 in Paris and went to Brighton College until 1881 before being admitted to Jesus College, Cambridge in 1890. He committed suicide in 1895 after taking an overdose in the family home in Oxford. The jury reached an open verdict that he died from opium poisoning as an alternative to misadventure or suicide whilst temporarily insane. It was said that he had been worrying about his academic career in Cambridge, and despite being very clever he had been unable to turn his abilities to any practical use. He had been suffering from toothache and insomnia and he may also have been epileptic. In a list of his cousins Wilfred Gurney just calls him ‘Evelyn’ and says that he was ‘very artistic and imaginative’ (Gurney, W.N.1954b, 63). He was buried in Brompton Cemetery, London, and Sybella was his sole beneficiary.

# Sybella

Wilson says of Sybella that ‘Biographical information on Gurney they [Scott and Bromley 2013] reveal is fragmentary and anecdotal at best’ (2018, 320). We do know that she was an active Christian and like her father high church. Her cousin Wilfred (1954b, 64) describes Sybella as a ‘blue stocking’. There are portraits of her at Keele University in the

Sociological Review Archive (GB172 LP/12/3/1) and in the Le Play Collection (KU-LP 12/2/14).

Sybella Catherine Nino Gurney (sometimes erroneously recorded as Nina) was born in France in 1870. The last of Archer's and Elise's children and their only daughter, she was named after Elise's mother, Sybella. She went to Oxford High School, Thomas Holloway's College for Women (now Royal Holloway College) where she came under the influence of Matilda Ellen Bishop, the first principal. Following Bishop to Egham Sybella learnt 'classical culture and tradition' under 'Great' scholar Therese Dabis. She then returned to Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford University taking the classical moderations examination for *Literae Humaniores* (Classics) obtaining a second-class degree in 1892 (Wilson 2018, 322). According to the *Oxford Times* 7 May 1892, five women were awarded degrees that year, one first class, two second class (including Sybella) and two third class. She then became the first librarian of the Nettleship Collection, today the library at St Anne's College.

After her studies Sybella began to focus on practical efforts towards social reform, inspired particularly by the ideas of cooperation and the work of the Labour Co-partnership Association (Gurney 1898). She developed a particular interest in housing and education, town-planning and rural development, and ultimately in the concept of Garden Cities. She became closely affiliated with the Garden City movement and was actively involved in the Co-partnership housing movement. She was Hon. Secretary of the Co-Partnership Tenants' Housing Council and on the Council of the National Housing Reform Council. She worked on housing schemes in Oldham, Letchworth, Kettering, Leicester, and the New Forest and was involved in the planning of Hampstead Garden Suburb. Her last and probably most important publication was Branford and Farquharson 1924.

In 1901 Sybella, still single, was living in Brockenhurst (Hants) with a domestic servant born in Rhayader (Radnorshire). One wonders if this servant was somehow connected to the family's brief time there in 1880-82,

although the servants with the family in 1881 have different surnames and Sybella's servant would then only have been around eight years old. Whether or not that is the case, the family employed staff who stayed with them loyally for many years, notably the three Irish female servants who were maids to Archer's mother in the 1850s.

In 1910 she married Victor V. Branford (1864-1930). He was a founder in 1904 of the British Sociological Society and editor of *The Sociological Review* from 1912 to his death. In 1920 they founded Le Play House, a centre for sociological research and study. Following their marriage the couple lived for some time in America before settling in Hampstead Garden Suburb. Gurney Drive there was named in her honour.

In 1912 they adopted two boys from a family unable to look after them and the boys were named as Archer Robert Branford and Hugh Sydney Branford, reusing the names Archer and Hugh from Sybella's siblings.

As late as the 1920s Sybella still wrote using a goose quill pen.

Following her death in 1926 *The Sociological Review* wrote that 'the classical culture and ancient philosophy of [her] Oxford days remained always the substantial background of her mind. But after passing through the School of Literae Humaniores, she took up economic studies... and was deeply influenced by John Stuart Mill's plea for voluntary co-operation.' *The Times* described her as 'a woman of most unusual accomplishment, charm and public spirit' (15 June 1926).

Sybella's will of 1926 left 'the picture of my mother [Elise] as a girl or the picture of my mother and grandmother [Catherine Harriet] to my goddaughter' [and first cousin once removed] Anne Sybella (1925-2001). Unfortunately, these pictures do not survive within the family.

In 2010 the *Sybella Gurney Educational Trust* was supposedly set up 'to educate undergraduates in the theories of Professor Patrick Geddes and Victor Verasis Branford at the turn of the 20th century. They offered an alternative to both capitalism and communism and addressed the bankers' role as well as government. They pioneered The Sociological Society at the

London School of Economics in 1904 and The Sociological Review published their theories.' No other information about this trust has been found.

# Chapter 2
# The Manuscript

## The Manuscript

The manuscript of the *Memoir* consists of 382 closely written sheets, each 15” wide and 10” tall and folded in half to create pages 7 ½” by 10”. The text is written on one side with *addenda* and notes on the blank sheet opposite. The script is far from easy to read (see frontispiece).

Chapter 5 reproduces Augustus’ text as transcribed; it has not been changed to conform with the publisher’s house style or other conventions. Deletions have been included with the text struck through so it can still be read. Many do not change the meaning or direction of the text but some are of interest. For example, Augustus says that ‘My readers little know how much many details I spare them in connection with this little tour.’ Where sections of text have been omitted by Augustus he usually (but not always) indicates this by rows of Xs. Word-for-word comparison between extracts in the *Memoir* and the published versions suggests that the former are generally but not always accurate. It is very likely that Augustus’ library included copies of all his brother’s published works, one of which, *Faust Part 2* (1842), survives in the family.

Archer died on 21 March 1887 and Augustus started work on the *Memoir* in the summer of that year. It was unfinished when Augustus died on 28 August 1888. An obituary recorded that Augustus last officiated at Little Hereford on Whit Sunday 20 May 1888 and that ‘his health had been gradually failing for many months previously owing to an affection of the heart’ and ‘a painful and trying illness.’ It seems likely that Augustus wrote the *Memoir* in the space of around a year, perhaps a little more. The fact that he refers to a portrait of Archer (probably that by Daffinger) as a

‘frontispiece’ suggests that he intended some form of publication. He seemed to be in some doubt as to whether his account of his brother’s life would be completed; ‘I earnestly trust that it may fall to my lot to complete it. Ill health makes this doubtful.’

Chapter I opens with the words ‘I have been asked by her who has the best claim to my services to write a *Memoir* of my brother Archer Thompson Gurney.’ The reference is of course to Augustus’ wife, Mary Ann(e) (*née* Nicholas) (1842-1925) and that is confirmed by family papers saying that she encouraged Augustus to put pen to paper. Augustus was also charged with sorting out Archer’s estate as sole executor.

The *Memoir* covers the period 1820 to 1855. It is very unfortunate that the rest of Archer’s life was not documented by Augustus before ill health and death brought his efforts to an untimely end. It is around140,000 words, so if Augustus had completed his account it might have reached around 300,000 words.

Augustus clearly had his mind on completion of the *Memoir* as he wrote at the very end of the manuscript ‘Closing words for Memoir. It is for posterity to decide whether the neglect which befell Archer Gurney here was deserved or undeserved.’ These words, especially ‘neglect’, show that Augustus’ main purpose was to demonstrate that the lack of recognition of Archer as a poet in his own lifetime was unfounded. Archer seems to have known of his brother’s admiration as early as 1855 when he wrote ‘Augustus, I believe, is most anxious for my success’ (Chapter XXX).

There is a document that sheds some light on Augustus’ plans for publication of the *Memoir*. On 4 August 1887 he wrote from Little Hereford to the publishers John Murray suggesting that the *Memoir* might be published in parts in their magazine (National Library of Scotland Archives and Manuscripts MS40499). *Murray’s Magazine: A Home and Colonial Periodical for the General Reader* had first appeared in January of that year. At this stage five chapters had been completed, and “his widow Mrs Archer Gurney will gladly publish the Memoir at her risk”. A note added to

the letter by John Murray on 5 August 1887 reads “declined: not suitable for our Mag.”

Undeterred, Augustus continued with the *Memoir* adding a further twenty-seven chapters between August 1887 and his death around a year later. It is not known if he made any further attempts to publish, but it is very likely that he did. Correspondence may be found on this matter in, for example, the Archive of British Publishing and Printing at Reading University.

# Lost and Found

When Augustus died the manuscript probably passed to Archer’s widow Elise and then on her death in 1907 to her eldest son Revd Gerald (see above). This makes it very easy for it to be in the hands of his sister Sybella just three years later. We know this from a handwritten note added to Chapter VII which is signed by her. This must have been added in or after 1910 when she started using her married name after her marriage to the British sociologist Victor Verasis Branford (Scott 2007, 466-7).

This means that the *Memoir* was lost from the family around 1910 until 1941 when it was shown to Richmond Gurney at Worcester College, Oxford, by Samuel Gurney. Samuel, from the Norfolk branch of the Gurney family, was a banker, publisher, lay preacher and respected member of the Anglo-Catholic movement. He appears to have been living at Pusey House Oxford where he was ‘thoroughly infused with Anglo-Catholicism’ (Yelton 2009, 86) and somehow involved with the library (Kemp 2006, 113; Yelton 2009, 99). The *Memoir* had not been accessioned into the Pusey House Library so perhaps Samuel had acquired it only a short time before his fortuitous meeting with Richmond and had not yet decided what to do with it. He may not have known about Archer’s disagreements with Edward Bouverie Pusey in 1866 (see below), so the library at Pusey House might have seemed an appropriate place for it to reside in the absence of any obvious alternatives.

Although Archer Gurney was never a member of Oxford University, in retirement he lived just around the corner from Pusey House. As a member of the Anglican high church it seems likely that he would have had at least informal connections with that establishment.

The reappearance of the *Memoir* is recorded in a letter from Richmond to his brothers Antony Archer and Richard: -

> 'You may remember that when I went up to [Worcester College] Oxford in 1941 I was given a manuscript written by grandfather. Samuel Gurney, one of the Norfolk Gurneys who was Librarian at Pusey House, told me that it had been discovered in a rectory in Norfolk where the rector had gone mad. He knew it had nothing to do with the Norfolk Gurneys and wondered if it had anything to do with our branch.'

and in another letter to his brother Gerald Nicholas: -

> 'It was given to me in 1941 by Samuel Gurney Esq., when I first went up to Oxford. Samuel Gurney is (or was, I am not sure whether he is still alive) one of the Norfolk Gurneys. He was then living at Pusey House, Oxford. Within a day or so of my arrival as a freshman, he sent me a note [having seen Richmond's name in the matriculation list] inviting me to go to the theatre with him and have supper with him after. He showed me the ms, saying that it had been found in the cupboard of a Norfolk Rectory where the Rector had gone mad. As he was a Gurney, it had been given to him. But he could not trace any connection between it and his own family, and he wondered if it was anything to do with our branch. I did some research among old copies of Crockford's Clerical Dictionary in Pusey House Library and discovered that Augustus William was our grandfather. Samuel Gurney therefore gave me the ms. Dad [Revd Archer George Harptree] had some fun sorting it out – all the pages were out of order.'

It is said elsewhere that the *Memoir* was ‘in a mess’ when it reached Richmond, and if it had not been well looked after before Samuel took it to Pusey House that might account for the missing Chapter VI. There is some evidence to suggest that Wilfred Gurney saw Chapter VI in the 1950s and if that is the case he must have been the one who mislaid it.

In 1963 Gerald Gurney wrote to his brother Richmond saying of the *Memoir* that ‘it would be remarkable if Uncle Bill [Wilfred] did not do something about it’ [when it came to light], but that seems to have been the case.

It is interesting to note that Richmond did not immediately recognise that Augustus was his grandfather and Archer his granduncle, suggesting that within the family at that time they were rarely mentioned, if ever. When Richmond told the family about the *Memoir*, including Augustus’ children, at least five of whom were still alive in the early 1940s, they knew nothing of it and for the most part they seem to have been surprisingly incurious. There was clearly little or no memory of Archer passed down through the generations. None of Archer’s children were alive in 1941, with Gerald the last to die in December 1939 followed by his widow Dorothy in 1942.

In family correspondence Richmond Gurney says that ‘he [the Rector in whose cupboard the manuscript had been found] was probably a Gurney because there is a Norfolk branch of the Gurneys.’ A search of *Crockford’s Clerical Directories* for 1931 to 1941 has failed to find a Gurney as the incumbent of any Norfolk living during that period, so it is far from certain that he was a Gurney, especially so as the Rector in question was clearly not related to Samuel Gurney.

When Revd Gerald died in 1939 probate was granted to his cousin Harold Manby Gurney. If the *Memoir* was part of Gerald’s estate it would be reasonable to assume that Harold would have found it of interest. It had been written by his father and he would surely have kept it in the family. Conversely it is known in the family that Harold had ‘all sorts of family

papers' which were disposed of when he died. We can probably assume that the manuscript was not with Gerald when he died, but if it was and Harold had come across it amongst Gerald's effects, he showed no interest in it then, nor two years later when the manuscript resurfaced in 1941. Of the two brothers, Wilfred seems to have been more involved.

Both Harold (b. 1874) and Wilfred (b.1876) would almost certainly have met their uncle Archer. Family papers record just one recollection of Archer by Harold, and that was that 'he boasted of having the finest port wine in England.'

We have seen that Revd Gerald Gurney was involved in the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom. The Guild had initiated the first public Walsingham Pilgrimage to the Slipper Chapel in 1897, and it seems likely that Gerald would have had many opportunities to be in Norfolk and in touch with Anglo-Catholic clergy in the Church of England there. Perhaps at some stage before his death Gerald had lent the *Memoir* to someone within the Anglo-Catholic community in whose Norfolk Rectory it was subsequently discovered. Someone sorting out the affairs of that Rector would probably not have known that it had come from Gerald, so they might reasonably have passed it to a local (Norfolk) Gurney, Samuel Gurney, simply because he had the same surname. Samuel Gurney had relatives at Walsingham Abbey which his brother Eustace had bought in 1921.

Unfortunately no-one asked Samuel Gurney for the name of the Rector or the parish in which the *Memoir* had been found, if indeed he knew. Richmond wrote to his brother Gerald in 1963 saying that 'Samuel Gurney may be able to give you more information about the origin of the ms.' All that may be deduced, circumstantially, is that the unknown Norfolk Rector was probably an acquaintance of Gerald's, he was an Anglo-Catholic, he had connections with Walsingham and that he knew of Samuel Gurney or the Norfolk Gurneys at Walsingham Abbey.

After 1941 the *Memoir* was passed by Richmond Gurney to his uncle, Revd Father Wilfred Nicholas Gurney (1876-1957) who like Archer was

very high church and spent time as a missionary in Korea and South Africa. It was returned to Richmond in 1957.

In 1954 Wilfred wrote a summary of the *Memoir* of which two versions exist. One is handwritten on fourteen pages of reused financial or legal documents (Gurney, W.N., 1954a). The other is an A5 notebook in three different hands one of which is Wilfred's (Gurney, W.N., 1954b). Wilfred says in a family letter in 1954 that his rough notes were 'afterwards written up better, at my dictation, by two girls whom I employed here for that purpose.' The notebook also has an annotation by Gerald Nicholas Gurney: 'Parts marked in red are W.N.G.'s [Wilfred's] additions.' These indicate that Wilfred had access in 1954 to his father's [Augustus William's] diary which unfortunately no longer survives. Wilfred writes:-

> 'At Vienna father [Augustus] now learned to play the flute, and I have once or twice heard him do so in his study at L.H. [Little Hereford].'
>
> 'Uncle Archer married Elise Hammett in St Paul's, Knightsbridge. Father writes in his diary 'Archer, with his hair famously brushed, marched down from the Altar with Elise on his arm, bowing right and left to his friends.'
>
> 'At Uncle Archer's wedding the reception was held at the Crystal Palace. That evening a great dinner party was held there, of which father [Augustus] said that it was 'magnificent in design but vile in execution.''

Since its consecration in 1843 St Paul's had been the first church in London to champion the ideals of the Oxford Movement and the 'Tractarians' who believed the doctrinal authority of the catholic church to be absolute. It was a most appropriate venue for Archer's wedding.

The Crystal Place, then at Sydenham, boasted in its Refreshment

Department ‘a number of dining rooms to suit the requirements of every class’ (Crystal Palace Company 1863). It certainly had the capacity to host some grand events; in 1854 the centenary dinner for the Society of Arts was held in a banqueting hall in the basement with seating for 750 (*Illustrated London News* 15 July 1854).

In 1953 Wilfred Gurney wrote to Richmond ‘I want you to have the incomplete life of your gt uncle Archer after my death. It is ‘interesting in parts.’’

Apart from Gerald Gurney, the Gurney family took not much more than a passing interest in the *Memoir*, and some regarded Archer’s poetry as little more than ‘Victorian doggerel’.

When Richmond died in 2004 the manuscript was passed to the present writer and another opportunity for the *Memoir* to leave the family or for it to be lost or destroyed was avoided. In 2006 it was deposited in The British Library, manuscript number Add. Ms 81597 and transcripts Add. 81598 A, B.

# Chapter 3
# Summary and Discussion of *The Memoir*

## The Face of an Angel

In Chapter I Augustus tells us that Archer was a 'beautiful child' and how at a young age he fell out of his highchair and struck the hearth, his hip was bruised, and he suffered from convulsions. Archer's subsequent 'treatment' brought about a permanent contraction of one leg, leaving him lame for life and needing to use a high boot. This made him painfully shy and at times fretful and impatient. 'Archer felt his lameness deeply, cutting him off daily as it did from some joy or other.'

Augustus quotes a letter to Archer from his mother dated 1841, when Archer was twenty-one. 'You are lame, it is true, but I do assure you that your lameness does not disfigure you in the way you imagine; on the contrary, I have no doubt that it gives you an interest in the eyes of many, particularly of the fair sex. You have a most intellectual and expressive face, and although your features may not be regular you are, when pleased and animated, quite handsome.'

Around the same time, Augustus described Archer as 'A good looking fellow' and tells us that 'There is a likeness of him as a very young man which hits him off well enough'. This is presumably the portrait by Moritz Michael Daffinger (1790-1849) who painted more than a thousand portraits after 1809.

A small photograph of the mature Archer is published in Jones 1903, plate VI, no. 6. This, the only photograph to be found to date, by Lock and Whitfield (active 1856-1894), must date between 1856 and 1887.

It should also be mentioned that another image can be found on several websites in connection with Archer's hymns, showing an elderly bearded

man. See, for example, www.hymntime.com/tch/bio/g/u/r/n/gurney_at.htm (accessed 27 January 2022). No primary source has been found, and it seems improbable that this is a portrait of Archer. Not only does the luxurious beard seem out of place for Archer, even in his later years, but the hair is parted on the opposite side to that on the one certain photograph.

Powell provides a description of Archer:-

> 'Let us endeavour to give our readers an idea of the outward man: he has the misfortune to be slightly deformed at the hip, and has a club foot : this, however, interferes little with his activity: about the middle size, has an open intelligible countenance, light brown hair, blue eyes, and fair complexion: his manners are frank and prepossessing, notwithstanding a more considerable share of self-respect than is generally apparent in our fellow creature' (Powell 1849, 252-3).

According to one obituary, when Archer first went to Paris 'his head and face were singularly fine and attractive.' Another reports that an American in Paris in the 1860s said of him 'I like your new minister. I found out the restaurant where he generally dines; and I go there only to sit opposite to him and look at his face - it's the face of an angel!'

# Childhood in Cornwall; 1820-1834 (Chapters I-V)

Archer, by birth and affection, was 'emphatically a Cornishman'. In a poem 'To Cornwall' in *Spring*, he wrote of the county as 'Home of my Fathers, and Friend of my Heart' (Gurney 1853b, 8). Both Archer and Augustus could speak in a broad Cornish accent, and in later years Archer would use that accent when addressing working men.

The family home was Trewinion House or, in some sources Gurney House, Tregony. 'By no means a handsome house, but it was roomy.' Wilfred Gurney writing in 1954 describes it as 'the Gurney's great white house', but he must have heard this description from within the family, as

he had probably never seen it. It was probably built around 1818 at the north end of the village, opposite St Cuby's church. Later it became Hart House School, also known locally as 'The Mansion', from the early 1840s.

Tregony in the 1820s was described as a once-flourishing seaport and market town. It had been reduced to abject poverty by the eighteenth century, as the river had silted up due to clay mining and the tide no longer reached the harbour. A large woollen cloth manufactory had long since been abandoned and the market was very small due to competition from Truro and St Austell. The population consisted chiefly of the labouring poor who were almost exclusively employed in agriculture, and many of the houses were small and wretched. Richard Gurney had horses that were occasionally 'borrowed' for smuggling.

Archer's mother Catherine Harriet, also known as Kitty within the family, was 'a great gardener'. She had bought a piece of walled-in land and a cottage at 'Furda' (also 'Farda' and modern 'Ferder') around half a mile to the south-east of the village. In 1948/9 Wilfred Gurney enquired locally as to whom it belonged. The answer was 'Nobody knows.'

In Chapter I we learn of an incident that was undoubtedly to shape Archer's life.

> 'When my brother was yet a very little fellow, so little as to sit on a highchair, he tilted the chair backwards, and falling clear of it struck the stone hearth…… His hip was found to be bruised, and he was presently seized with convulsions….. He was hurried up to Town in a post chaise to secure the best advice; and Mr Benjamin Brodie and Sir Astley Cooper did their best or their worst for him, for they caustickied his hip every day for three months, and tied him daily for many hours to a flat board, granting no exercise or freedom for six months to the bruised limb …..This primitive treatment brought about a permanent contraction of one leg, so that my brother was rendered lame for life, necessitating the use of a high boot, and very trying this lameness

proved. So long as he was a young man, he could never enter a room in which people were assembled without a painful shyness, whilst he was shut out from many sports to which he much inclined.'

Archer's treatment, presumably in London and at significant expense, was under the care of two eminent medical practitioners; Mr Benjamin Brodie (1783-1862), the physiologist and surgeon who pioneered research into bone and joint disease at St George's Hospital, Tooting, and Sir Astley Cooper (1768-1841), surgeon and anatomist at Guy's Hospital. It seems to have been the case that resting in the horizontal position was generally favoured rather than drains, caustics and 'machinery' (Baynton 1813), but poor Archer was subjected to both methods.

In a second tragic coincidence, around the same time as Archer's accident, his sister Frances (Fanny) fell out of a perambulator, dashing her head on the ground. After this 'the brain stood still in respect of reasoning power, never making advance' although 'she was not an imbecile.'

The Gurney household consisted of Archer's parents Richard and Catherine, Archer, Frances, Augustus and Richard. There were servants including at least two local nurses and both grandmothers. Archer's maternal grandmother, Catherine Harriet Thompson *née* Pigou, is referred to as 'Grandmother Thompson.' She lived with them into her old age, dying on the continent at Neuwied. The other grandmother was Bridget (1750-1835), the widow of Revd Richard Gurney (1748-1825). Augustus describes Trewinion House as 'a veritable old Damery.' There was also a great white poodle called Gendarme.

Also in residence was Archer's great-aunt Miss Harriet Pigou, his grandmother's sister, who was very close to Archer. She is referred to as 'the beautiful Miss Pigou.' Unfortunately there is no known portrait of her and no details of her life beyond the few references in the *Memoir* have been found. She may have been connected with the Pigou family in Paris and the curate Francis Pigou (1832-1916) at the Marboeuf church (see

below). There is a letter from Archer to his great aunt from Helston School in 1832 and another in 1841 in which his ‘most tender and undying affection’ for her is very apparent. According to Augustus she died not long after their final meeting.

The family would certainly have attended St Cuby’s church almost directly opposite Trewinion House. The incumbent there was Revd Richard Gurney, Archer’s grandfather, and Rector of Tregony between 1795 and 1825.

The Wooldridge family (see Chapter II) lived nearby, and Archer’s and Augustus’ aunt Anne (1783-1817) married Colonel or Brigadier General James Warwick Wooldridge, R.N (1813-1891). One of their four children, William, also a Captain R.N, was Augustus’ godfather. Another cousin, Francis or Frank, died courageously boarding an enemy ship, the *Rainha da Portugal*, as Flag Lieutenant under Vice-Admiral Napier during the Battle of Cape St Vincent on 6 July 1833. In Chapter II, Augustus includes a *Monody* on the death of Francis Wooldridge, written by his father Richard. When Richard Gurney died his estate went to Bridget, his wife, with the proviso that various Wooldridges should be well provided for, again showing how close the two families were. References to an Archer Richard Gurney Wooldridge reinforce that suggestion (*National Archives* ADM/157/1978/11).

In Chapter II Augustus quotes four lines from Archer’s first play, the name of which is unknown, written around 1827. Even at this stage Archer’s love of theology and religion are mentioned and his interest in politics and preaching; in the absence of a human audience he was discovered addressing a collection of dining room chairs! When Archer was ordained Deacon in 1849 he was the only one on that occasion to be licenced to preach. He may have taken as a model his headmaster at Helston Grammar School, Revd Derwent Coleridge, whose sermons were ‘plain, striking, impassioned and scholarlike.’

Although Archer did not usually commit his sermons to paper (‘it is

contrary to my usual practice to deliver a written discourse' (Gurney 1858d, 6)), a number were published during his lifetime (Gurney 1850a, 1850b, 1858d, 1860d, 1872). They are of course quite unlike his 'renderings' of other poets and his own poems and are far more accessible; they are the words of a priest to his people or, as he describes them, his 'brethren' (Gurney 1858d). Augustus says that his sermons were 'beautifully delivered and 'he gave thoughtful men something to ponder over in every sermon' (Chapter XXVI). His voice was of wide range and sympathetic.' Another source states that 'Mr Gurney's teaching is distinctively anti-Roman, but kindly and charitable in tone, and seems specially adapted to thoughtful minds and earnest natures' (*Buckingham Advertiser and Free Press*, 2 January 1875).

When lessons and outdoor play were finished for the day, the Gurney children read fairy tales, tales of chivalry, the *Arabian Nights* and Miss Edgeworth's *Early Lessons* (Edgeworth 1801a) and *Moral and Popular Tales* (Edgeworth 1801b, 1804).

In Chapter II Augustus quotes from Archer's earliest collection of poems, *Spring, March and April Ditties*, III (Gurney 1853b, 5-6). This was possibly inspired by a childhood incident when Archer feared that his mother had been swept out to sea and drowned.

Tregony was a rotten borough returning two members until the Reform Act 1832. Archer's father, Richard, like his father before him, Revd Richard, had parliamentary aspirations. In 1830 he had supposedly been elected as one of the members for Tregony, but there had been a second poll in which he was not successful. There was confusion over which of the two polls was legal and binding and there were allegations of bribery. Richard petitioned the House of Commons on the matter, but that was found to be frivolous and vexatious, and he had to pay all the costs. He also failed to be elected at polls in April 1831 and February 1832. Augustus includes in the *Memoir* an eight-verse 'Tregony Election Song', in which 'Dickson' is his father, Richard, who probably composed it. In 1846, Archer composed a

similar song when he stood for parliament himself (see Chapter XXII).

## Schooldays at Helston; 1832-33 (Chapters III-IV)

Archer wrote of his time at Helston in his *School-Boy Memories* in *Spring* (Gurney 1853b) and to Augustus this is 'a golden mine.'

Helston was one of the four stannary towns in Cornwall, an administrative centre for the collection of duty on locally mined tin. In 1831 it had a population of 3,293. Fisher (2009) describes Helston at this time as

> 'a thriving' market and stannary town in the south-west of the county, on the London to Land's End road, consisted chiefly of four wide and well paved streets, which crossed at right angles. It was the focus for an extensive and fertile agricultural region to the south and east and a highly productive tin and copper mining district to the north and west, and its market was justly ranked among the principal ones of Cornwall. A large proportion of the inhabitants were employed as mechanics, many of them being shoemakers, and some were engaged in pilchard fishing from the nearby harbour at Portleven. The general condition of the town was said to be improving, and several families possessed of property in the county had taken up residence there.'

Both Archer and Augustus were boarders at Helston Grammar School, then considered to be the best in Cornwall and known as 'The Eton of the West' or 'The Little Eton of England.' It provided education to the children of the local gentry, most of whose wealth derived from tin and copper mining in the area. In 1833 the school had twenty boarders and a considerable number of day scholars, the fees for whom were thirty-two guineas a year, plus eight guineas for tuition (Chitty 1974, 41 and n19).

The headmaster between 1826 and 1841 was Derwent Coleridge (1800-1883), the son of the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, described by Archer as 'our learned master, a poet's son, and eke a poet he' (*Spring, Schoolboy*

*Memories*). Coleridge's educational philosophy was to encourage his pupils' development of thought and power of reasoning, alongside studies of grammar, ancient languages, science and theology, and activities including music, dancing, debates, recitations of Shakespeare, Milton and the classics, cricket, and fishing (Hainton 1996, 37). The boarders enjoyed a great deal of freedom to come and go. Coleridge has been described as 'an exceptional headmaster who was to have a lasting influence on the educational development of the nation' (Dare and Hardie 2008, 11).

At school Archer had no difficulty learning Latin, 'he was exceptionally quick', 'No boy in some respects stood higher in the school', 'He was popular in his way' and he was a 'Raconteur par excellence.' Archer was given a prize for the best English speech (poetry recital) by a junior boy, despite being technically disqualified from this by having won it the previous year. He had recited the King's speech from *Henry V*, Act IV, Scene III.

Another pupil at the school between 1832 and 1836 was Charles Kingsley. He and Archer 'must have been rivals where the powers of imagination were concerned.' Kingsley's time there was recounted by his wife, Frances Eliza Kingsley (Kingsley 1877, 22-37), but there is no mention of Archer.

Archer and Kingsley never met after their schooldays, but they did correspond; in Chapter XXVIII Augustus includes two letters from Kingsley to Archer, both dated 1854. Archer had sent Kingsley his *Songs of the Present* (Gurney 1854) and then *The Transcendentalists* (Gurney 1853a) and a discussion between them about the merits or otherwise of a number of contemporary poets ensues. In a letter to Archer on 3 October 1855 Kingsley wrote 'I have deserted poetry as rats do a sinking ship' (Thorpe 1937, 140).

There is an interesting account of a well-known and traditional Helston festival, Flora Day, and the Flora or Furry Dance, one of the oldest folk customs still practiced in Britain today. Archer's lameness prevented his

participation in the children's dance, but he took refuge in a local bookshop where he was probably more than content.

Augustus lists several of the boys who were at Helston School, among them Grylls Major and Minor and their father gets a mention in a letter to his great aunt, Miss Pigou, in 1832. That was most probably Humphry Millet Grylls, banker and solicitor of Helston, who was largely responsible for keeping the Wheal Vor mine open during the 1830 recession and to whom an arch in Helston was dedicated on his death in 1834. Of the other surnames of their schoolfellows - Treweek, Borlase, Moyle, Tonkins, Bolitho and Hockin - several are still to be found in the area to this day. In the 1820s members of the Grylls and Borlase families variously held positions as Mayor or Alderman and were involved in local politics.

Holidays were spent at home in Tregony, occasionally in London or at Paul in Cornwall with their 'Uncle Warwick', the Revd Warwick Oban Gurney. He was fond of Archer, taking pleasure in his marked literary taste and talking with him about books. In London Archer and Augustus were occasionally taken to the theatre. Archer was delirious with joy at seeing his first pantomime and his love for drama only deepened as he got older.

Even at this early stage there seem to be some clues as to certain aspects of Archer's future. On a trip in a stagecoach from school to home at Tregony Archer engaged in a political discussion with a distinguished country gentleman. On a boat from London to Falmouth Archer comforted a sick woman passenger during a storm with prayer and reading, 'an occupation in which he was to take delight through life.'

# The Flight to the Continent; 1833-1843 (Chapters V-XVIII)

It must have been the debts arising from Richard's gambling and the 1830 election that compelled the family to flee the country. Much of Archer's childhood was consequently occupied with travel in various European countries. This was even though 'Our father could hardly derive much

pleasure personally from Continental life. He never mastered French and German, speaking those languages after an abominable English fashion.' In contrast, Archer appears to have been something of a linguist. He mastered German at Neuwied and Italian and French in Lucerne, in addition of course to Latin and Greek from his schooldays.

Archer and the rest of the family stayed in Neuwied (1834-6), Weimar (1836), Dresden and Lucerne (1837) and Nancy (Lorraine) (1837-8), before Archer went to Vienna with his father (1838-41). In total, his travels across Europe will probably have amounted to some three thousand miles, not including any trips back to Britain from time to time. Comments on the family's European travels are few and far between, but the move from Cologne to Aix-la-Chapelle, around forty-five miles, was done in an open carriage in a day. The Rhine passages were on steamboats.

Augustus tells us how the financial difficulties came about, although he would have been oblivious to these at the time: -

> 'All at once we learnt, my brother and I, that we were not to go back to Helstone. No explanations were given at the time; but a simple putting of two and two together since then has made all plain enough. Our father had certainly 'outrun the constable', i.e., had got into debt. Those three contested elections, and the lawsuit arising out of the last, must have cost many thousand pounds. The advowson of Thatcham had been sold without putting things straight. And, as we came to understand gradually, our father had lost large sums at play besides. We learnt later that he paid when he lost, but, in the rarer instances when he won, did not exact his winnings. There was no reciprocity.'

The *Memoir* records that Richard continued to gamble on the continent at Neuweid (1833-5; Chapter V), but not for large amounts.

There is reference to an IOU seen by Augustus from an unnamed Earl for £10,000, which was never exacted. One possibility is Edward Boscawen

(1787-1841), 1st Earl of Falmouth, MP for Truro in 1807-8, Viscount Falmouth 1808-1841 and a neighbour to the Gurney family. In the Derbyshire Record Office (D3155/C/6267) there is a handwritten note by Falmouth recording a wager in 1825 which may be a similar document. In his *addenda* to his summaries of the *Memoir*, Wilfred Gurney refers to another IOU in his possession in 1954 for the sum of three thousand pounds in the name of Alder (Gurney, W.N. 1954a, 1954b).

In 1804 Revd Archer Thompson, Richard Gurney's father-in-law, had bought the Advowson of Thatcham, mentioned above, where he had been the incumbent since 1793. This was to become an important part of Catherine's inheritance after the deaths of her parents and sister with Catherine as sole heiress. During the 18th century there developed a bustling trade in advowsons, and these could be sold to the younger sons of the gentry for anywhere between £1000 and £2000 pounds (Cummins, D.J., 2011, 221). That may explain why the Thompson family viewed Richard Gurney with some suspicion, thinking that as he was a gambler he might have his sights set on Catherine's inheritance.

On her father's death in 1805 Catherine would have inherited the advowson. Richard and Catherine married in 1819 and the advowson was sold in 1828 to a Mr John Hanbury (Barfield 1901, 167). The sum involved does not appear to have been recorded.

In 1834 Richard's financial situation again became critical, most probably from his gambling debts. In the first instance the family fled to London and went into hiding near the Thames. Richard wore a wig in the street as a disguise and the family, without Richard, soon moved on to Grays (Essex). From there they left England on a steamboat, the *Remona*, to Rotterdam, with Richard furtively joining them from a smaller boat in mid-river.

On their travels Archer 'remained grand at telling tales', and the boys would 'seek in turn for inspiration from some object on his own side of the high road. Perhaps an old house, or a tower, or a wood, or a queer-looking mortal, turned up, anything gave the signal for a tale.' Archer's stories were

‘German in spirit, mysterious and romantic’ and the foreign education gave him ‘a love for directness and simplicity in verse, the effect of which is apparent in his poems.’ Archer’s unpublished play *Alboin* from 1846 (see below) set in 14th-century Sweden appears to be entirely invented, and not based on any historical characters or events.

# Neuweid 1833-35 (Chapter V)

From Rotterdam they went up the Rhine to Cologne along ‘the usual route’ (Doerfel 1986, 83), and then on to Aix-la-Chapelle where they found an apartment. Within a month both Archer and Augustus went down with fever. Richard continued to gamble, but only for small amounts. They moved on to Neuwied, ‘an ugly little town’, where they stayed for the next two years and where Archer and Augustus attended school. The Moravian Brethren, Protestants who had settled there from the later 17th century encouraged by its religious tolerance, ran well-respected and flourishing boarding schools for boys and girls. These were popular with the British and between 1831 and 1841 150 out of 346 pupils were from Britain (Doerfel 1986, 83). No doubt the two boys were provided with a good education, albeit ‘desultory and eclectic’, at a lower cost than in England, reflecting Richard’s reduced circumstances. During the family’s ten years abroad, Catherine stood by her husband, and it seems likely that her yearly income must have been their main means of support.

It would have been at the Moravian school at Neuwied that Archer mastered German with ease and developed a deep and lasting appreciation of German literature (Little 1972, 631). Aged just sixteen he translated Friedrich Schiller’s play *Turandot Princess of China* (1802) into English. This was Archer’s first appearance in print (1836), but as it was published in Frankfurt it seems to have escaped the notice of the British media. That is, until, bizarrely, eighty-eight years later when, for reasons completely unknown, *The Sporting Times* of 13 December 1924 published the following: ‘As far back as 1836, dear old Archer Thompson Gurney while

sojourning at Neuwied-on-the-Rhine, sampling Hocks and Moselles, startled the literary and dramatic world with an English Version of Schiller's tragi-comic drama in which he makes the Chinese emperor sing.'

In addition to Goethe, Schiller and Novalis, Archer became familiar with the work of well-known and less well-known contemporary German poets who subsequently featured in his *Teuton Forest Echoes* published in *The Churchman's Companion* (Gurney 1857, 1858a, 1858b, 1858c, 1859a, 1859b, 1860c). These included Johann Uhland (1787-1862), Nikolas Lenau (1802-1850), Johann Tieck (1773-1853), Karl Simrock (1802-1876) and Zacharius Werner (1768-1823).

The Gurneys attended social events at the palace with Princess Louise, musician, painter and poet, author of *Songs of Solitude* and sister of the naturalist, botanist and ethnologist Prince Alexander Philipp Maximilian zu Wied-Neuwied (1782-1867). Maximilian had returned to Neuwied in 1834 after travelling through North America and becoming ill with scurvy. The Gurney family mixed with the town's leading inhabitants including a Mr Herborn, a lawyer in the employ of the Prince. The Herborn daughters referred to Archer as 'Herr Professor.' The Gurneys were also friends at Neuwied with Sir William Thorn (1781-1843), and the boys read his account of a campaign in India (Thorn 1818).

# Weimar, Dresden, Lucerne and Nancy; 1836-38 (Chapters VII-X)

At Weimar the family were 'reckoned among the nobility.' Richard, their father, had attended a few lev*é*es or royal receptions in England and had brought his court suit abroad with him. This gave them access to the Weimar Court of the Grand Duke Charles Frederick, and Richard was 'a born courtier.' When he returned to London to transact some business, the Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna asked him to get her some Irish poplin, and the Grand Duke gave him some messages to deliver to King William IV. It is not known if Richard had sufficient status or connections within the royal

household to enable him to deliver these messages to the King in person. If he had, no doubt Augustus would have known of this and mentioned it.

The period 1832 to 1861 was Weimar's 'Silver Age.' Goethe had just died and there were efforts to revive intellectual life and to make the city great again. Visits to the theatre were the family's chief delight, and at the State Theatre in Weimar they first saw *Faust Part 1* (Goethe 1808). They met people who had known Goethe, who had lived there from 1775 until his death, and Schiller. Reference is also made to private theatricals performed before the Grand Duchess, in which Archer recited some Goethe.

Here Archer began the 'long series of renderings from German poetry which forms part of his unpublished literary heritage, and will I trust yet see the light.' Augustus must be referring here to works by Archer still in manuscript and unpublished at his death.

In 1837 the family were in Dresden for several months where Archer and Augustus had a tutor, a young Lutheran minister and a man 'of learning and culture.' Their tutor taught them French, Latin, Greek and arithmetic, and Archer learnt Italian with ease. He read works by Victor Hugo and rendered into English verse 'anything that caught his fancy.' Much of Archer's work involved 'renderings' of the work of others. In doing so he produced a likeness of the originals rather than precise word-for-word translations.

The family then moved to Lucerne, staying at the Villa Segesser which was near the lake and half a mile from the little cathedral, and then to Nancy (Lorraine) where they were 'on visiting terms with the ancienne noblesse.' The Segesser family had included Philipp Anton Segesser (1689-1762), the Jesuit priest and missionary in Mexico and, a few years later, the architect Paul Segesser (born 1847).

## Austria and asphalt; 1838 (Chapter XI)

The family went to Paris to attend a wedding and stayed there for a while. This was probably Archer's first sight of the French capital, to which he was to return some twenty years later. Augustus attended a highly

prestigious French school, the Collège d'Henri Quatre (now the Lycée Henri-IV), but Archer moved to Vienna with their father Richard who had obtained the concession to lay Seyssel asphalt throughout Austria.

In the 1800s large asphalt deposits had been found in France and Switzerland, and the merchants of those countries began to promote asphalt products for various uses. One significant find was the Seyssel asphalt deposit discovered in 1735 in the Rhone Valley in France. This was marketed in France from 1802 under the name 'rock asphalt mastic,' and was used for surfacing floors, bridges and sidewalks (see http://asphaltmagazine.com/asphalthistory_two/ accessed 10 March 2020). In Britain, patents began to appear from 1834 and it was used for pavements in London in 1836.

This was a period when, under Prince Metterlich as chancellor between 1821 and 1848, Vienna in particular saw the modernisation of its buildings, infrastructure and road network, hence Richard's venture into asphalt. In the meantime, the rest of the family and their maid Maria who had travelled with the family from England went to Pisa. Maria stayed with them until 1842 when she left the Gurney household to work for a Russian family. Frances (Fanny) had been placed in a convent of St Nicholas near Nancy, and Augustus quotes from *Spring* (Gurney 1853b, 104-8), in which Archer recounts his visit to Nancy to see Frances, only to discover that she had died the week before.

# Vienna and Grillparzer; 1838-1841 (Chapter XIII)

To Augustus' dismay 'Scarcely a letter of his exists belonging to this period' when Archer continued to work with Richard on the asphalt venture. They had transferred £3000 to the Viennese Bank which crashed almost immediately. One wonders where this £3000, the equivalent of £425,000 today, had come from. Archer became a creditor of the Bank and filed a lawsuit but, like his father Richard in earlier times, he was unable to recover a penny. This was in 1838, a full ten years before the commercial crisis in

neighbouring Germany and the political upheaval and runs on the Viennese banks in 1848. In *Spring*, Archer mentions ‘guile and wrong from evil-hearted men’ during his time in Vienna (Gurney 1853b, 140).

At the Burgtheater in Vienna, Richard and Archer saw plays by the leading Austrian dramatist of the 19th century, Franz Grillparzer (1791-1872). Archer made the acquaintance of Grillparzer, who the Viennese critics had ‘wounded deeply’ by damning the first performance of his *Woe to the Liar*. Other cultural activities that would have been available in 1838 included charity concerts by Liszt in aid of the victims of flooding in Western Hungary.

Augustus wrote ‘To my joy, I have recovered a page or two of torn manuscript by my brother to the following effect’, followed by ‘A Few Words about Grillparzer’ which describes Archer’s first meeting with him in 1838, ‘some thirty years ago.’ This manuscript of Archer’s of around 1868 was still available to Augustus some twenty years later.

To Archer, Grillparzer was ‘the special object of my young idolatry’ and his ‘abiding conviction of his sterling, and in some respects inestimable worth.’ In return, Grillparzer took an interest in Archer’s poems and encouraged him in his choice of subjects.

Archer was an enthusiastic admirer of Grillparzer, as the following extracts demonstrate: -.

> ‘To me one of the most delightful reminiscences of Vienna is that of the great dramatic poet, Grillparzer – one indeed, to my mind, of the greatest of the great. My friends have been apt to set the opinion down to personal friendship or the enthusiasm of youth when I told them, what I still think, that Grillparzer (pronounce Grillpartzer), was a greater dramatist than either Schiller or Goethe; but such is my deliberate conviction, to which indeed I am ready to pledge my little reputation as a critic. I hold that a higher power and a more genial art are shown in such works as ‘The Dream a Life,’ and ‘The Waves of

Love and Ocean,' than in 'Faust' and 'Egmont' and 'Don Carlos.' A certain underlying irony is rarely absent from the most pathetic works of Grillparzer, which supplies the saving salt to literature and wards from grave errors of taste, and from the absurdities which shock us every now and then in the masterpieces of those more famous men I have named - a sense at once of the greatness and littleness of things. Scott has it, Shakespeare has it, Tennyson also in due measure, and Grillparzer in perfection. Schiller is always on the stretch, and Goethe is too often small; one unreal and the other prosaic. Of course they remain poets of the very highest order. But Grillparzer is famous in Austria, though scarcely out of it. It is the settled conclusion of North Germany that Austria is Boeotian; and Grillparzer, having written a tragedy in praise of loyalty, 'The Faithful Vassal of his Lord,' has become a name forbidden. He was an ardent constitutionalist when I knew him, not long after the publication of that drama - a lover of England but not of pure democracy; a rather reserved, retiring man, and yet to me, the youthful Englishman who sought him out to lay my soul's homage at his feet, open as the day and kind; perfectly unassuming. It may go for a little, but I never knew a man in whose presence my heart swelled so with reverence. Conscious of his own powers, content to be neglected or even forgotten - tears almost start to my eyes when I remember him now, and feel the littleness of vanity. He took the warmest interest in our English Constitution, and again, in a very different matter, our English dramatic literature. In particular he thought that our best comedies were far too little known upon the Continent. He instanced several pieces of Mrs Centlivre's as being masterpieces in their way. Exquisitely, to my mind, that is, with subtle truth, has he delineated the good and evil of Vienna, in a lyric which may be thus freely rendered. It is called 'A Parting from Vienna.' It was written before the writer's Italian journey, and I give it here as bearing so directly on my subject, and suggesting much, with the concentration

> poetry alone attains to, that might be expanded into an essay of many pages.... I have met with many celebrities in the course of more than forty years, but never with an individuality which impressed me with such a sense of quiet far-reaching power as that of my dear friend Grillparzer. The world has scarcely given him his due, but I am satisfied that future generations will seek to atone for this by the warmth and ardour of their praises. Not only books have their fates, as Horace (sic) has it, but poets also' (Gurney 1866b, 408-9).

and

> 'Grillparzer is never weak and never foolish. After Shakespeare, he is perhaps the greatest dramatist of all time' (Gurney 1874, 168).

Grillparzer's connections with England have been studied extensively and the interactions with Archer fully explored by Little (1972). The two men had much in common, and Archer elicited from Grillparzer 'a letter which in length and candor is virtually unparalleled in Grillparzer's mature correspondence' (Little 1972, 641).

Despite his admiration, Archer seems not to have translated and published any of Grillparzer's works (Bonnell Green 1959, 333). Nor is it likely he intended to (Little 1972, 634). 'His [Archer's] translations of G's works, which he presumably made between 1842 and 1855 [including *Der Traum ein Leben* and *Das goldene vliess*] were, however, permanently withheld from publication' (Little 1972, 633). As Wodehouse notes (1949, 285),'Translators have fought shy of Grillparzer's works apart from *Sappho* and *Medea*…..Nothing is known of the Reverend Archer Gurney's translations of Grillparzer's plays - *Sappho*, *The Dream of Life* and *Woe to the Liar* - beyond what he [Grillparzer] says himself in a letter to the poet [Gurney] of 13 December 1871.' Later, back in England, Archer gave lectures on Grillparzer to various learned societies wherever he happened to

be.

One of Archer's foremost friends in Vienna was the Austrian poetess Betty Paoli (born Barbara Elisabeth Gluck) (1815-1894). No doubt she came to Archer's notice in 1841 when she published a small volume *Gedichte* (poems). These had caused a sensation in Austrian literary circles and led to her becoming acquainted with Grillparzer.

References to early, undated, and lost works by Archer include mention of *Aldor,* possibly from the Old English for chief or prince, and the name of a youthful king of Albany. Featuring a fairy queen Rosabelle and gnome king Zulred, this 'grand fairy opera in 5 acts still exists [in 1887]… it is my brother's first dramatic piece in order of time, apart from childish rubbish' written at Vienna. This, as far as one can tell, appears to have been an invention entirely by Archer, rather than a reworking of an existing fairy tale. 'How many lyrics and boyish dramas – one I recollect was called *The Adlonite* – Archer read to Richard and me! Later, some of these early dramas were of set purpose destroyed by their author, but not all were so destroyed.'

Of the period 1838-41, Augustus wrote 'Dick and I formed an enthusiastic if undiscriminating audience, and compensated my brother in a measure by our genuine delight for those later cool and disappointing receptions which were to befall his greater and riper works. As yet, everything in Archer's life was bright and hopeful.'

While in Vienna Richard seems to have maintained business interests back in England. On 25 November 1841, he took out a Cornwall patent for 'a method of cutting wood and encrusting the same in order to present a sure footing for horses and other purposes.'

# Return to England; 1841-42 (Chapter XIV)

Archer left Vienna for England to study law, being articled to a barrister, Mr Stevenson. He wrote to his aunt, Miss Pigou, 'I still have great hopes of making a reputation as an author.' Archer's inclination was to take Holy

Orders, but this was thwarted at this time so as not to go against his father's wishes.

According to Augustus 'It is a thousand pities that Archer was not sent to Oxford or Cambridge. He needed to be brought into touch with young Englishmen of whom as yet he had seen so few. It was desirable also that he should measure himself against others and find out where he was inferior to them as well as where he was their superior.'

His mother wrote to Augustus that he is 'quite dis-satisfied not to be already known as an author' and, to Archer, 'never fear, your genius will yet make its way, but we must have time and patience.'

## *Faust*; 1842 (Chapter XV)

Between 1813 and 1850 the translation of German literature into English was devoted almost entirely to the works of Goethe and Schiller (Milburn 1964, 109). In the 1840s no fewer than seventeen editions of Goethe's *Faust* were published, and there was a veritable 'Faust-craze' (Milburn 1964, Table III and 112). The most popular translations or renderings of *Faust* were by John Anster (1835), Anna Swanwick (1849) and Bayard Taylor (1870) (Milburn 1964, 112-3).

Archer's rendering - as opposed to a strict translation - of *Faust: a tragedy. Part the second* (Gurney 1842; hereafter *Faust Part 2*) was his second publication and his first in this country. Augustus received copies of *Faust Part 2* as it was published in monthly parts, and reviews in July 1842 appear to be the first mentions of Archer in the British media.

Augustus also had a bound copy of *Faust Part 2* which has passed down through the Gurney family. Augustus has signed the flyleaf and has been through the volume adding in his own hand the *Errata* to the main text, as well as some changes that are not on the list. The volume shows considerable signs of wear on the boards and the spine, so it appears to have been much used.

With *Faust Part 2*, Archer was probably hoping to emulate the success of

Hayward's prose translation of *Faust Part 1* some ten years previously (Goethe and Hayward 1840), which had 'lifted him [Hayward] at once into the front rank of literary men' which was always Archer's aspiration. Hayward had cautioned against attempts to translate *Faust Part 2*, with specific reference to the dungeon scene (which Archer also published in *Spring* - Gurney 1853b, 62-69), while Austin (1841, 275) refers to *Faust* as 'that untranslatable poem which every Englishman translates.' Archer's 'Concluding Remarks' explain to the reader that his aim was not a literal translation, but an attempt to produce or 'render' in English the effect produced by the original author, the same 'melodious harmony' and 'beauty', and 'It is for the public and the critics to decide whether I have failed or succeeded in my task. I have furnished them with the standard by which I desire to be tried' (Gurney 1842, 336).

*Faust Part 2* was favourably received in some quarters, and with a degree of amazement that the task had been achieved so well by an Englishman, albeit one who had spent a considerable time in Germany. It was said that 'At this time, Archer knew German as perhaps few other living literary Englishmen knew it.' Conversely, a letter in 1842 from the composer Howard Glover (see below) to Archer mentions a review in which the critic advises Archer 'to take a few lessons in German.'

Augustus also wrote 'A more just reception of this work might have altered the whole tenor of his literary career. Its failure deeply disappointed him; and to this failure I attribute his never having published his other translations or renderings from the German; *Faust Part I*, *The Song of the Vale*, *Woe to the Liar*, *The Life in a Dream*, *Sappho*, *Teuton Forest Echoes* &c &c..' In Chapter VII Augustus includes an extract from *Faust*, the famous *Garden Scene* which is from Archer's unpublished *Faust Part I*. After Archer's death, extracts from his *Faust Part 2* were included in the occasional anthology; see, for example, Shipley 1902.

Archer was friends with the opera composer Howard Glover and, through Glover, John Sims Reeves (1821-1900), the foremost English operatic,

oratorio and ballad tenor vocalist of the mid-Victorian era. We learn that Archer and Glover were youthful and intimate friends and worked together in the 1840s on the latter's operas.

Augustus provides the following anecdote: - 'One day the librettist [Archer] played his friend the composer a trick. Glover was seated at his piano seeking an inspiration for some aria or movement, with the librettist by his side, when the latter who had set the passage to music of his own hummed the melody as though Glover had just originated it. In another moment Glover said 'I have it', and reproduced in all innocence no doubt with musicianly embellishments, the melody Archer Gurney had just hummed. The secret was never divulged.'

Two of the operas on which Glover and Gurney collaborated were *Attila* and *Aminta or The Coquette*. In 1850 Archer was working on further libretti with Glover in mind as the composer, including operas based on Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*. Augustus had access to the manuscripts of these in 1887 and, knowing that these works will probably never be published, he includes extracts from *Attila* and *The Tempest*.

*Attila* was probably based on the German poet and dramatist Zacharius Werner's (1768-1823) drama of the same name (Werner 1808; Werner 1812). The full opera was never staged or published, and the *Memoir* is the main source of evidence for Archer as its librettist. Scenes, extracts or songs from the opera were performed between 1845 and 1854, including the 'The Song of Attila' within a set of native German songs, *Deutsche Lyra*, translated by Archer (Burdekin 2020). Glover also set to music a song by Carl Simrock, which Archer had translated (Glover 1861).

In an 1842 letter Glover wrote that 'This time the pundits are all in raptures. In fact they go so far as to pronounce some parts of your 1st Act of *Attila* to be worthy of Goethe!! … I have to add that I have tried the whole of the translations through with the music and find them admirably adapted to it. My impression is that you could not have succeeded better … My

Mother [Mrs Glover of the Haymarket Theatre] herself considered the 1st version too terrible, and but ill adapted to the English stage … you took your idea of the heroine [Idelfonsa] from a poem by the German poet Werner, and you yourself have, you will allow, strongly Teutonic tendencies.'

In 1842, Maria, the family's long-serving maid, left to become a nursery governess in a Russian family at a very high salary. In his summary, Wilfred Gurney wonders if this is the same Maria who was with the family in Oxford many years later, and who used to accompany his Aunt Elise (Archer's widow) on visits to Augustus' rectory at Little Hereford between 1878 and 1888.

# Karl Simrock; 1842-43 (Chapters XVI-XVIII)

Archer and the rest of the family joined Richard, who was unwell and convalescing, in Bad Laubach on the Rhine near Coblenz. There he became an active member of the 'Pleasure Committee' attached to the recently opened cold-water healing facility. They then moved on to another similar establishment at Marienberg monastery, near Boppard, except for Archer who returned to London. In 1843 Archer re-joined the family at Bonn due to his father's continuing ill health.

Archer was reading Blackstone (Blackstone 1765-70 or another edition) and cultivated the friendship of the German poet and writer Karl Joseph Simrock (1802-1876), some of whose poems he rendered into modern German or English (see in the *Memoir* Chapter XVII, *The Devil and the Wind* and *The New Ulysses*). Archer wrote of Simrock that he is 'a delightful poet and a great personal friend of my own' and 'I shall ever revere his memory as I loved the man.' Archer was especially attracted to Simrock's poem *Die hoffenden Toren* (*The Hopeful Gates*) (1844) which he called *The Fools of Hope* and translated into English (1849). This particular poem seems to have resonated with Archer who was 'to prove hope's fool throughout life; for he never ceased to hope that he might attain to some

great sphere of usefulness in the English Church and to poetic fame.'

Archer wrote a poem of considerable length entitled *Percival*, knightly and romantic in character and based on the German legend of *Parzival.* In 1887 Augustus wrote of the unpublished work 'I have merely seen the original draught, written mainly with a pencil and partly obliterated. Whether any better copy exists I know not.'

Richard died in 1843 and was buried in the cemetery at Bonn, with Archer providing an epitaph for his tombstone. Then, after some time at Königswinter, the family returned to England in 1843 where the Oxford Movement was 'in full swing.' Archer 'threw himself ardently into that movement', and 'He espoused the Anglican or High-Church side of the controversy, but with a powerful anti-Roman bias.' The years 1844 and 1845 marked the peak of hope amongst those of that persuasion that there might be an Anglican return to unity with Rome. Archer became actively involved in the Oxford Movement, although being based in London rather than Oxford probably meant that he was somewhat on the periphery.

## *King Charles the First*; 1844-46 (Chapters XIX-XX)

The family were living at Stoke Fleming near Dartmouth, and 'no doubt to the delight of many an editor' Archer wrote countless poems and magazine or review articles for publications such as *The English Churchman* where Archer was on the staff, *Foreign Quarterly*, *Theologian*, *New Quarterly*, *Union Review*, *The English Review* and the *Morning Post*. 'Editors, when hard up for matter, had only to suggest to him an interesting subject, sending withal the needful book or books, and the M.S. they wanted would be pretty sure to be in their hands by return of post.' At this time writing articles and reviews for magazines was probably Archer's main source of income, whereas the publishers of his books of poems may well have required him to pay a fee which might be refunded if enough copies were sold to cover expenses. Many articles were under his *nom de plume* of,

appropriately, the astrological *Sagitarius* (*sic*), the archer. Occasionally Archer wrote to the media under that thin disguise and spoke of himself as though he was another person.

Archer wrote *Love's Legends* (Gurney 1845) comprising three poems *Adhemar's Vow*, *Bertha* and *The Peri*. 'Dashed off for instant publication' and an immature work according to Augustus. Reviews were generally positive; 'A volume of very good poetry', 'A very cleverly written collection' and 'A pretty little volume.'

Within a year Archer had completed and published *King Charles the First* (Gurney 1846), his 'earliest serious original poem.' Augustus recounts that Archer was writing an act a day and on one day he completed two; it 'poured forth like a stream of molten ore from the poet's mind.' Rightly or wrongly Archer generally made few corrections, on the basis that 'the happiest expression ever came first.'

Some greeted the poem with enthusiasm: 'In announcing, therefore, our conviction that Archer Gurney fully deserves the title of a dramatist, in its highest and strictest sense, we are allotting to him no common or every-day distinction, but one which he shares with few, few of the sons of song, and fewer still of his own countrymen. Such, indeed, is our conviction; and in support thereof we refer our readers to his Charles the First' (Anon 1852, 123).

Other reviews were again very mixed, and although there was at least one subsequent edition (Gurney 1852) and possibly a third, it did not achieve popularity. 'The critics did nothing weighty and effectual on its behalf' and many ignored it altogether.'

A review published in *The Spectator* on 21 November 1846 noted that Archer, not agreeing with accounts of King Charles' character, had 'improved the history' and 'When a writer starts with such ideas of his subject and his art, it is useless to discuss the questions of how far the story of Charles the First may be fitted for a drama, to what extent an historical dramatist may be permitted to alter the facts of history, or whether he can be

allowed to alter them at all.' The conclusion was that Archer's volume 'is a study of political monomania.' Its merits if any remained unacknowledged when Augustus was writing in 1887/8, although it appears to be the work of Archer's that has been published most widely.

## Parliament, the Lake District and a Visit to Wordsworth; 1846 (Chapter XXII)

Archer, then of Rock Vale, Devon, decided to stand for parliament, speaking as the Protectionist delegate for South Devon at a meeting in Exeter. 'He never ceased to hope that our toiling millions be blessed by protection to native industry.' He hired a venue in London for a public meeting, anticipating that Richard Cobden and John Bright, the principal advocates of free trade, might join him in debate. In the event the meeting was crammed with his opponents and the popular vote went against him.

Even though Archer was virtually unknown in Yorkshire, he expressed his willingness to stand as the self-nominated Protection candidate for the seat of West Riding at the 1846 by-election, as no-one else wanted to do so. The *Bradford Observer* described him as 'A great unknown from the metropolis.' At a rally in Wakefield only eleven people attended, seven of whom were reporters.

George Lane-Fox (1793-1848), who had been the Tory MP for Beverley in 1820-26 and 1837-1840, then decided to stand for the seat so Archer withdrew. Lane-Fox stood down at the eleventh hour and Archer was invited to stand, but it was too late. Viscount Morpeth, Whig, retained the seat unopposed. After these setbacks, Archer wrote 'I should never have been a great politician, because I lack the genius for details, and hate drudgery.'

On 11th May 1846, Archer was appointed as a Barrister-at-Law in the Middle Temple, and he appeared as Junior Counsel in two unimportant cases, although Wilfred Gurney wrote in 1954 that they were 'two big law suits.' These seem to have been the climax of his brief legal career. There

are mentions of a ‘Gurney’ in reports on legal proceedings around this time, but it is not certain that the references are to Archer (*The Jurist* vol. X, Pt I (1846) 185 and vol. XI, Pt 1 (1847) 230, 285-7, 693, 869, 997).

Around this time, May 1846, a manuscript of *Alboin. A Play in Five Acts* by Archer was submitted for licensing. A copy of all new plays had to be lodged with the Lord Chamberlain at least fourteen days before the first performance was due. He could ban any play or part of a play. *Alboin* is only known about because it is included in a collection of similar manuscripts now in the British Library (Add MS 42994 (7), ff. 208-251b). It is not mentioned in the *Memoir*. The play is not in any way connected with the 6th-century king of the Lombards of that name, but is set in a Swedish monastery in the 14th century where Prince Alboin is a monk.

Notes on the cover of *Alboin* indicate that it was written in February 1844 at London and rewritten in September 1845 at Rock Vale. It was to be staged at The Theatre Royal, Edinburgh in 1846, but there is no evidence of it being performed there or indeed anywhere else. In Chapter XXII there are passing references to a visit to Edinburgh in 1846 after the Lakes, and it seems likely that Archer had written *Alboin* with the specific intention of it being staged there.

When brother Richard died, just eighteen, their mother Catherine suggested a tour of the Lake District and they left London on 16th July. Archer was clearly inspired by the beauty of the Lake District landscape, and his ‘verses flowed forth at the sight of a tarn or mountain as spontaneously as the water-falls.’ Augustus wrote that ‘His *Lake Songs* have never been published, so I shall interweave a few of them with my slender narrative.’ Six of Archer’s poems inspired by Windermere, Loughrigg Tarn, Rydal Water, Coniston, Grasmere and Derwent Water follow. At school at Helston Archer may have heard of the Lake District from his headmaster, Derwent Coleridge, as he had been brought up there (Hainton 1996, 27-30).

Archer’s *Songs of the Lakes* were never published although a fragment did appear from his ‘Lake Lays and Lyrics – Unpublished’ (Gurney 1848).

Augustus tells us that

> ‘His Lake Songs and Poems would almost fill a small volume, though I fear, some are lost. Of the few in my possession I will add yet two or three …. I can only conjecture that he did not print these Lake Songs with his other poems, because he hoped to publish them by themselves, unless indeed he held them too slight for publication. For aught I know he may have polished and improved them; I am quoting from the original versions …. Once written, he never appears to have given them another thought. At this time everything turned to poetry under his hands. He was like a rose-tree ablaze with blossoms, and it is likely that some buds might have been best thinned out to make the others perfect.’

One might assume that Archer’s visit in 1846 to William Wordsworth at Rydal Mount, where he lived from 1813 to his death in 1850, would be one of the most interesting episodes in the *Memoir*. Unfortunately, his encounter with the semi-reclusive seventy-six-year-old Poet Laureate, straw-hatted amongst his raspberry canes, reveals no great insights into the man or his poetry. During the visit Wordsworth was at times gruff and at other times amicable to the Gurneys, but warmed to them when discussing the landscape and scenery as he did in that same year with other visitors (Ross 1958, 210).

Archer also told Wordsworth that he was about to publish *King Charles I* and begged his acceptance of a copy. It is not known if it was sent, or what Wordsworth made of it, and no copy is to be found in the Wordsworth Trust collection.

On his return to Ambleside Archer was at once inspired to write a poem ‘To the Great Poet of Nature, William Wordsworth.’ The original manuscript of this is preserved in the *Wordsworth Trust collection* (ref WLMS A/Gurney, Archer/1).

Archer also delighted in the writings of Miss Harriet Martineau (1802-1876), the social theorist and writer, who had built a house in Ambleside and lived there from 1845. At Ambleside Archer also became acquainted with the celebrated Professor of Music, organist and composer at Kendal parish church, Thomas Scarisbrick (1806-1869). Archer wrote the words of a song for the opening of the Lancaster and Carlisle Railway with music by Scarisbrick.

In sharp contrast to the account of the meeting with the literary giant Wordsworth, Augustus includes in full a letter dating to 1846, complete with all its grammatical errors, from their former servant, Mary Byrne, to his mother. Mary had lately left the family's service (in London, 4 Stanhope Street, Regent's Park), moving to a position in a house 'in the square at hide park gardens.' This letter also refers to Mary's sisters Kate and Ellen, and Mary being 'one of three sisters who had all been or were to be our mother's maids.' Later, Archer's housekeeper in Soho (in 1851-3) was Kate Byrne, 'his mother's trusty Irish servant' and 'who supplied a big cup of coffee and a slice of bread and butter to all the members of the [Parish] club who required these things, for one penny.'

## Howard Glover; 1847-48 (Chapter XXIII)

Perhaps surprisingly, Archer still harboured political ambition and he was a prospective Conservative candidate for Lambeth at the 1847 General Election. He withdrew having entered the contest far too late to stand any chance of victory.

It was through Howard Glover, violinist, pianist and opera composer, that in 1847 both Archer and Augustus met and became friends with the great English tenor Sims Reeves and tributes to both Glover and Reeves are included in *The Transcendentalists* (Gurney 1853a, 1855b). According to Wilfred Gurney (1954), Sims Reeves stayed with Augustus at the Rectory in Little Hereford. Archer also came to know Howard Glover's mother, Julia, who specifically asked for Archer to minister to her on her death bed.

Unable to reach her in time, he subsequently wrote a *Farewell Address* to her which Augustus reproduces. Glover died in 1875 and in 1877 there was a public appeal by his family (wife and twelve children) for funds, to which Archer contributed £5 (Burdekin 2020).

Augustus wrote of Glover 'He was witty and agreeable, with affection as well as admiration, and [Gurney] grieved not lightly over his premature death and comparative failure in life. Gurney's verdict respecting the friend of his youth was probably sound, and was to the effect that Glover possessed several qualities of a great composer, a strong vein of melody, imagination, grace, power, knowledge and dramatic fire - but was wanting in perseverance, being unable or unwilling to face severe and continuous application.'

# The Chartist Scare 1848 (Chapter XXIII)

The Chartist Scare of 1848 is one of only two events of national or international signifiance to feature in the *Memoi*r. The other is Archer's *Ode of Peace* written in opposition to the Crimean War (see below and Chapter XXXI).

In 1844-47 Archer had contacts with the most prominent members of the Chartist movement for political reform, Feargus O'Connor and Ernest Jones. Archer and Jones were said to be political opponents but 'best friends' (Gildart, Howell and Kirk (eds) 2003, 146) and 'on terms of the closest intimacy.' They had been law students together around 1841 and in 1844 Archer had helped Jones in some way when the latter was facing financial disaster over the purchase of the Kearsney Abbey Estate in Kent (*Newcastle Chronicle* 12 February 1898).

Archer was also godfather to Jones' son, Llewelyn Archer Atherley-Jones (1849-1929). An *Album* of sketches, writings and poems by Jones and others in the British Library (Add Ms 61971A) includes handwritten contributions by both Archer (five poems) and Augustus (an extract from Tennyson's *The Princess*).

As well as being a leading Chartist, Jones was also a poet and novelist. While in prison he wrote an epic poem, *The Revolt of Hindostan*, supposedly in his own blood on pages torn from a prayer book (Jones 1857).

Archer was not a supporter of the Chartist cause and in 1847 he challenged Ernest Jones and Feargus O'Connor to debate in public the Chartists' cause (*The Northern Star* 6 February 1847). The report on the meeting between Archer Gurney and the Chartist Thomas Clark says that only four out of the many present supported Archer and the Chartist principles were welcomed with three lusty cheers (*The Northern Star* 20 February 1847).

During the 'Chartist Scare' of 1848 a huge demonstration was planned with a march from Kennington Common to Parliament on 10 April to present the Chartists' third and final petition. An enormous number of special constables was recruited, and the military were in force and in readiness to prevent the protestors from crossing the Thames. Augustus tells us that Archer, at that time a barrister of the Middle Temple, was entrusted by Jones to deliver a message to Downing Street on 9 April with an undertaking that, if the Chartists' petition was delivered to the Government, the protestors would remain peaceful and stay south of the river. On the evening of 9 April, Jones made a statement regarding the willingness of some of the Chartist leaders to abandon the Kennington Common meeting, and no doubt any number of messages were being sent between the Chartists and the government as tensions rose.

Wilfred Gurney (1954a, 1954b) wrote that on 'April 10th 1848' ….Uncle A[rcher] and Father [Augustus] both enrolled as 'special constables.' The Duke of Wellington (the Great Duke) placed cannons [*sic*] to sweep all London bridges, if it became necessary. But Uncle Archer was deputed to bear a message to the Ministers of the Crown assembled at 10 Downing St, and conciliation was effected.'

If Archer played any role other than as a messenger that is not recorded,

and there is no mention of him in, for example, the studies by Goodway (1982) or Weisser (1983). The surname Gurney is listed amongst those attending meetings of Chartist delegates and conspirators before and after 10 April (Goodway 1982, 228-9), but this is likely to have been either William Gurney (Gammage 1894, 338) or Joseph Gurney (Hughes 2020).

# In Hiding in Dorset 1848-49 (Chapters XXIV-XXV)

Archer was now in London staying with his mother and mainly studying theology rather than attending to his failing legal career. As late as 1890 a curate described theological training at the time as 'little more than could be squeezed out of a boiled-down Paley [possibly Paley 1809], and the dry notes on the one Gospel in Greek Testament required for the Littlego (*sic*)' (Anon 1890). The 'Little Go' was the entrance examination for Cambridge.

In lieu of payment for literary work done Archer had accepted shares in a publication and when it became insolvent he was proceeded against for its debts. For five months Archer went into hiding in Dorset staying with his 'honoured friend', fellow churchman and author Revd James Bandinel (1814-1892), curate at Whitchurch Canonicorum between 1847 and 1856. No doubt the two men had much in common as Bandinel was another poet whose work had, rightly or wrongly, been harshly scrutinised by the national press.

Bandinel wrote to Augustus in 1887 having been told of Archer's death. 'His almost total independence from party influence or party bias in matters of religion was one of your brother's distinguishing characteristics… intense truthfulness distinguished all his thoughts and feelings and words and actions. It was a matter of impossibility for him to tell or act a lie…. in the same way he was incapable of any meanness. He was in fact thoroughly a man….one of the most delightful companions in society or private that I have ever known. …I have only met with two men whom I consider his equals… 'Lavalette' Bruce [Michael 'Lavallette' Bruce (1787-1861) whose

exploits earned him a degree of celebrity status in England (Bruce 1953)] and Washington Irving [the American writer, historian and diplomat, 1783-1859].'

He also included the following, written around forty years earlier: -

Archer Gurney, Archer Gurney, in thee I've found at last
The substance of the shadow which I worshipp'd in the past,
The heart that cannot waver, and the tongue that cannot lie,
The faith that cannot falter, and the love that cannot die,
And the ever living, ever springing hope that cannot fail,
And the eye that never cowered, and the cheek that ne'er turned pale.

While in hiding Archer wrote a theological drama *Majorian* about the Roman emperor of that name (AD 457-61) and the Christian priest Lucillian. We know from Chapter XXIV that Augustus looked up authorities relating to Majorian for Archer in the Bodleian Library and 'The drama is divided into five Epochs, each being the length of an ordinary play…. it is intended for the study only, and not for the stage.' The work is not listed amongst Archer's works in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* as it was never published. Again, Augustus must have had access to a manuscript copy, now lost.

A review published in 1849 did not speak well of Archer's poetry, but it is worth quoting in full: -

'Mr Archer Gurney is another specimen of that small tribe of versemongers which have the same proportion to poets that monkeys have to men; like that chattering tribe, their gibbering and antics are sometimes diverting, but there is something painful and revolting to our feelings in the absurd resemblance they bear to the superior race. Mr Gurney has published two volumes, the first, an apish resemblance to 'Lalla Rookh,' entitled 'Love's Legends,' and the other a curious

drama, called ‘Charles I’; the latter is, perhaps, the funniest specimen of a tragedy on record. While Talfourd’s tragedies are pretty, Gurney’s are funny; it was suggested by the author of ‘Orion’ that there was a striking resemblance between the hero and the poet, in the fact of both having no head; be this as it may, Mr Archer Gurney might just as well have been without his head, seeing the little use he has made of it in this curious drama. Two out of three of the scenes end thus, in the very middle. ‘The scene closes in great confusion—exeunt confusedly.’ An act is generally brought to its termination in this ingenious manner: ‘a great uproar, the curtain falls amid wild confusion.’ This terrific confusion and disorder are the only evidences we have of Mr Archer Gurney’s head. We ought to add, as another proof of this young bardling’s genius, that at a dissolution of Parliament he rushes about, as a sort of clown, contesting impossible elections; now he suddenly appears as the antagonist of Lord Morpeth, for the West Riding of Yorkshire, but on the day before the election he forgets all about it, and rides home on the outside of the mail; he then throws a sommerset, and comes plump down at Lambeth, where he threatens to annihilate Mr Hawes, but he don’t altogether do that, for on the close of the poll the numbers are somewhat in this fashion—Hawes 6097, Gurney 1. This solitary voter turns out to be Mr Hawes himself, it being customary for each candidate to vote for his antagonist. Mr Gurney’s last political feat was to accompany his friend, Mr Ernest Jones, to a Chartist Meeting, where he disturbed the harmony of that rational class of beings by undertaking to prove them all wrong, and consequently engaging to convert them all into loyal and contented citizens. The argument was closed by their ejecting the eloquent tory head over heels through a window into the street, minus his hat and coat; it is rumored that Mr Fergus O’Connor was seen the next day in a far superior cover to where his brains ought to be, and also in a better surtout. It is shrewdly suspected that he, like the Romans of old, wore his vanquished enemy’s

armor as ‘optima spolia.’ We forbear trespassing on our reader’s patience by giving any specimen of these gentlemen’s poetry’ (Powell 1849, 252-3).

# Ordination and Exeter; 1849-1851 (Chapter XXVI)

At this point it might be timely to consider how Archer’s views on religion in general and Anglicanism in particular were established. Archer’s grandfather and the Rector of Tregony, Revd Richard Gurney, died when Archer was five years old, so he would have had no influence on his beliefs. Archer’s headmaster at Helston, Derwent Coleridge, was a traditional high churchman, although probably not the Tractarian that some of his contemporaries claimed him to be (Nicholas 2007, 33). Henry Phillpotts, the Bishop of Exeter between 1830 and 1869 who ordained Archer, was also a traditional high churchman, not a Tractarian, and part of the conservative high church wing of the Oxford Movement. He was sympathetic to the Ritualist movement but was practically the only bishop who was (Reed 1988, 392). Later, at Soho, the Revd Nugent Wade was an extreme high churchman and member of the Oxford Movement. It seems clear that since Helston School, Archer had been exposed to the high church tradition. This must surely have influenced him, no doubt to his disadvantage in the long term as far as his career in the church was concerned.

Having made good progress with his theological studies, when Archer sought ordination in 1849 he was ordained Deacon by Phillpotts within a few weeks of his application as ‘His theological and classical acquirements were considered too notorious to render any further training necessary.’ No doubt Phillpotts was also aware of Archer’s pedigree, with clerics in the family stretching back to 1708 in Cornwall, at that time part of the Exeter Diocese.

The requirements of candidates for ordination at the time were clearly set

out in canon law but Bishops were able to exercise their judgement. There was an age requirement of twenty-three for a Deacon and twenty-four for a priest, and it was the norm for ordinands to have a degree from Oxford, Cambridge or Durham. In the absence of a degree a candidate with good testimonials and who was 'literate', with knowledge of Latin and of course Holy Scripture, could be ordained at a bishop's discretion with little more than an interview to assess the candidate's suitability and with or without other forms of examination. Archer fell into the 'literate' category and Augustus tells us that Archer's contributions to the *English Review* and two of his essays had counted in his favour.

The process leading to ordination around this time is documented by Haig (1984, 183-192). The 'few pleasant days' spent by Archer with Bishop Henry Phillpotts at his palace at Bishopstowe just before his ordination may have included examinations, but whatever the process Augustus, who was ordained a year later in 1850, says so little about it that to him it must have been unremarkable. Either way, Bishop Phillpotts was a formidable character, a man with high standards and a strict disciplinarian. His examinations of candidates for ordination were said to be searching (Tindal Hart 1970, 169-170).

By 1867 the ordination of untrained so-called 'literates' had become exceptional (Haig 1984, 122), but Archer's appointment took place when more clergy than ever before were needed, and a growing number of young and enthusiastic candidates were being accepted due to the failure of universities to provide graduates in sufficient numbers (Haig 1984, 117). Archer was ordained priest a year later, as usual, in 1850. The church presented career opportunities for educated men at a time of excitement, growth, mission and controversy, all of which must have appealed to Archer.

Archer's first curacy was at Holy Trinity, Exeter in 1849-51, a church just south of the cathedral where he had been ordained. In the 1851 census he is listed as 'Assistant Curate', which was the tier of curates below 'perpetual

curates' who had the same duties as a vicar or rector. Assistant curates were in effect subcontractors to the incumbent, totally at their beck and call and reliant on them for a good reference when seeking another position. During the 19th century their lot was not always a happy one (Tindal Hart 1970, 127-173). However, depending on the proximity, health and degree of involvement of the incumbent, a curate might be left to manage the church and parish on his own.

Curates at the time were not expected to have views, to engage in the issues of the day or in any way to outshine their employer, the incumbent. It is difficult to imagine Archer not doing all of these things simultaneously. It has also been said that it was not seemly for a curate to show an acquaintance with German culture or the German language, and Archer was more than acquainted with both.

Archer's income from the Church was £40 a year. In 1853 the average stipend for a curate was just £79 per annum, and in the 1860s around £100. In 1858, the stipend could be as low as £20 (Tindal Hart 1970, 136). At £40 a year Archer's first position was not well paid.

Archer is later described as 'The Tractarian Curate of Holy Trinity' and 'one of the most ardent Tractarians the Diocese of Exeter can produce' (*Bell's Weekly Messenger* 28 February 1852). Partly because bishops refused to give livings to Tractarian priests, many of them began building churches and working in slums, and this is probably how Archer came to be working firstly in Exeter where, in the 1840s, there had been significant poverty (Devon Record Office 74B/MFS43) and then in London. It has been suggested that the Tractarians moved into the slums partly because they were not accepted elsewhere (Ramsay 1995).

That said, both Tractarianism and the Oxford Movement that followed had stirred up the church's concern for the welfare, both spiritual and material, of the working classes, and that is something that appears time and time again during Archer's life. In Chapter XV, Augustus tells us that Archer, after a youth spent in luxury, became a socialist, having been left

penniless by his father.

Archer was also appointed Bodleian Lecturer at Holy Trinity in 1850 delivering lectures on Thursday evenings. Thomas Bodley, the founder of the Bodleian Library in Oxford, was born in Exeter in 1545, which no doubt accounts for the position. The role of Lecturer was that of an ordained preacher chosen by the church's Vestry Meeting and paid for by voluntary contributions from the congregation, in this instance, of around a thousand people. Augustus tells us that Archer's best sermons were those he delivered at this time (Chapter XXVI).

Late in 1850 there were 'Anti-Popish and Anti-Tractarian' meetings and a great demonstration in Exeter, which Archer attended. Many of the clergy in the Diocese appear to have been supporters of the Oxford Movement, and some had defected to Rome. During his time at Exeter Archer was delivering sermons on themes such as 'Union and Victory' as part of his Bodleian Lectureship, and Augustus considered these to be Archer's most tender, thoughtful and powerful sermons.

In 1851 Archer was dismissed from the lectureship, having served only one year of the usual two. The controversy described below might possibly account for this.

There was at this time what was described in the media as 'The Sham Jesuit Plot.' Jesuits or Roman Catholics in Exeter had conspired with 'most monstrous insinuations' and 'vile terrorism' much to the alarm of the local Protestants. A young lady, Miss Julia Monk, age fourteen, of Archer's parish had been stalked by an unknown clergyman and isolated in a locked room and under duress she had been 'terrorised into taking the most fearful oaths, abjuring her own faith and professing all the errors of popery.' A threatening letter attached to a stone had been thrown into her bedroom, promising 'revenge' if she did not attend midnight mass. Miss Monk was taken to London for her safety, her family fearing her abduction, and a £25 reward was offered to anyone who could identify her abductors. Archer was accused of somehow being involved in this with his 'supposed friends, the

Jesuits', and it was said that the whole matter was 'a hoax devised by me [Archer] for my own especial glory and that I am a Jesuit in disguise!' The matter had been 'whispered about in Exeter during the last three weeks' and the officers of justice were looking into it. An article entitled 'A Story About the Jesuits' in the *Western Times* on 28 December 1850 concluded 'We believe that the Jesuits will compass sea and land to make a convert, and that they are not very nice as to the means which they sometimes adopt. But their means are always consistent with the end. They make the convert before they make any noise about it. In this case every measure was taken to ensure publicity at every step, and the conversion was not made. It looks like a sham plot.'

James Bandinel told Augustus that at Exeter 'your brother was put to much annoyance by a young lady who attended his pulpit ministrations falling desperately in love with him and being terribly disappointed poor girl at his not reciprocating her feelings', but this was probably not Miss Julia Monk.

# The Soho Years; 1851-53 (Chapter XXVII)

In 1851 Archer moved to London where his housekeeper was the family's faithful servant Kate Byrne.

At this time the Anglican Church adopted a strategy of subdividing densely populated parishes in poor districts and recruiting clergy such as Archer to establish schools, gather congregations and build churches as centres of spiritual, pastoral and philanthropic care especially for the working class and poor of the capital (Jacob 2022). Galvanised by the 'High Church' Oxford Movement, 2438 churches were built or rebuilt between 1851 and 1875.

This is the context in which Archer moved to work in Soho, possibly because that presented more employment opportunities than could be found elsewhere. It has also been suggested that with the advent of a religious boom there was an acute shortage of places for the newly ordained to find

appointments either as curates or as incumbents. In the 1850s many Anglo-Catholic priests and curates accepted positions as ‘slum priests’ in the new missionary chaplaincies in poor urban areas. ‘But they are remembered mostly for living in the abject poverty of a Victorian slum. Their lot was not easy and the cultural boundary they had crossed was huge. They could have chosen much more comfortable lives for themselves’ (Stratford 2008, 39-43).

Archer was one of three curates in charge of the church of St Mary the Virgin, Crown Street, Soho, although in some sources he is said to be in sole charge (Rimbault 1895, 165). St Mary’s was a chapel of ease to St Anne’s under Revd Nugent Wade, a Puseyite and supporter of the Oxford Movement, and a gathering place for the new generation of Anglo-Catholics in central London. It was described as ‘an entirely free church, consecrated for the use and benefit of the working class’ (Anon 185-). The building on the site had been a dancing saloon, subsequently brought into ecclesiastical use as a Greek Church, then French Protestants followed by Calvinistic Independents. No. 10 Crown Street, east of the church, was occupied by the curate.

At this time Soho was ‘the most poverty-stricken, vicious and neglected spot in London.’ Archer and his colleagues were looking after the spiritual wellbeing of 8000 to 10,000 souls, although Archer was not the only priest working amongst the urban poor nor was he the most noteworthy (Reed 1988, 375-6). As well as the clergy, barristers and the like would also visit lower-class households (Gurney 1874, 219), and Archer had the idea that the establishment of Church Guilds, as associations or brotherhoods, would facilitate fellowship between the lower classes and the clergy (*ibid* 202, 243).

His congregation comprised mainly of ‘The poorest people from the neighbouring courts and alleys’ and ‘many Irish.’ There were around 108,000 people of Irish birth in London in 1851 (Pooley 1989, 66), predominantly low-skilled workers concentrated in inner-city areas and

living in sub-standard housing (*ibid*. 70).

Anglo-Catholicism had developed a special relationship with the slums of east and south London from as early as 1843. Many working-class congregations were practicing Anglo-Catholics, and high ceremonial, dramatic and 'beautiful' services which appealed to the poor became established (Reed 1988, 375); no doubt the ritual and impressive liturgies provided a powerful contrast to their otherwise drab lives. When a new vicar at St Mary's church 'lowered' the services in 1874 there were protests (*ibid*. 393).

There were two services at St Mary's each day, and sermons most evenings which were well attended. The work, essentially missionary in nature, must have been exhausting. In a catalogue of Soho's worthies, Archer gets a single mention as an 'energetic and devoted priest' (Cardwell *et al* 1903, 161). Describing his work there, Archer states that a priest is

> 'under the most positive obligation to make himself personally acquainted, as far as possible, with the individuals resident in his parish or district, with them, their wants, and their distresses.' 'A certain amount of moral courage is doubtless requisite in such an undertaking; and desirable, we should say, is a flexibility of mind and disposition, a readiness for all comers. At least, these qualities are useful, though not indispensible; for it is probably that sincere and earnest piety, and true love of the brethren, will more than supply their absence.'

Archer's time and experiences at Soho resulted in *Songs of the Present* (Gurney 1854), the general intention of which was 'to convey words of hope and encouragement to those whose lot it is to labour, and the pleasures, pains, hopes and disappointments of many situations in life are feelingly and graphically described.' It was well reviewed, with one writer praising the songs and the 'warm and loving tone in which they treat of the wrongs and suffering of the poor.' Another wrote 'Thus have we followed

our author through his earlier career - thus have we seen that career commence with the comprehension and translation of the mighty work of a mighty master [Goethe's Faust] - proceed through the flowery maze of poetic fancy, and attain a lofty summit of lyrical excellence' (Anon 1852, 123).

It was also from the 'grimy squalor' of Soho that Archer published his earliest volume of poems, *Spring* (Gurney 1853b). There are ninety-two poems, some of which are dated to 1850, just after Archer's ordination, on themes including family, friends, various locations in Austria, young love and loss, including his sister Fanny and his father Richard. The volume also includes open attacks upon his critics, naming those of *The Times*, *The Quarterly* and *Athenaeum* in particular. Archer wrote 'I write these rhymes with chief intent to flout thee' (*Proem and Dedication* 1850) and 'Stuff'd bones and skeletons as well might walk as you, pretenders aught save verbiage talk' (*Epilogue* 1853).

One reviewer wrote that 'Surely there are few more exquisite things to be found amongst the fugitive poetry of any language than this little piece [*The Young Nun's Dream*; Gurney 1853b, 96-99]; it combines, indeed, the grace of Anacreon, with the elegance of Catullus, whilst the pearl-like dewdrops of poetic fancy with which it is besprent, glisten with the mysterious glory of a higher and a better world' (Anon 1852, 119).

Other reviews included 'We would gladly praise him or any other writer who would give us real poetry of any sort; but, with the best intentions, cannot discern in his pages anything of the kind. The rhymes are such as most tolerably educated people, without much ear for rhyme, could make by the score; and there is nothing in their thought that challenges attention' and 'There are in this collection of poems some remarkably pretty pieces, in the best style of graceful poetic thought, and full of sweet sentiment.' Archer intended to produce a second edition, without the attacks upon his critics, but it never materialised.

Augustus tells us that 'The failure of *Spring* plunged thorns and stings of

disappointment into the author's mind …. the discouragement was profound. What he wrote henceforth was written more or less desponding (sic); in any case the stimulus of praise was wanting ….. in spite of that heart and countenance were to remain bright and hopeful for many a year.'

We have seen that Archer Gurney was the librettist for Howard Glover's opera *Attila*, staged in Frankfurt in 1842 but never in England. Performances of a second opera, variously referred to as *La Coquette*, *Aminta, The Coquette* and *A Match for a Magistrate* were planned for 1845 but there is no evidence that they ever took place, possibly because of the unexpected absence of the leading lady (Burdekin 2020). The opera was premiered in Glasgow in 1849, followed by Liverpool and in 1852 the Theatre Royal, Haymarket. Contemporary reports of the 1852 production describe the libretto as 'meagre, pointless, and almost devoid of dramatic interest', 'the libretto is above the average' and 'the author of the drama having prudently concealed his name.' Burdekin (2002) wonders if, after his ordination, Archer would not have wanted his name associated with a comic opera with so provocative a title. That may explain why the libretto for the opera staged at the Haymarket in 1852 has been credited to John Oxenford (Nicoll 1962, 509), who perhaps created a version of the libretto based on Archer's original. Another link between Archer and Oxenford occurred around 1850 when they both contributed translations of words by assorted German poets for *Eindruck und Ausdruck. Six German Songs* (British Library H.1653.k.(3.)).

Archer left Soho for Buckingham in late February 1854. This was timely, as August that year saw an outbreak of cholera based around the Broad Street water pump and famously identified by John Snow as the source of transmission. This led to a mass exodus (75%) of its inhabitants. The filth, disease and poverty that Archer must have witnessed on a daily basis in Soho is described in his essay 'Parochial Visitation', published in *The English Review* for October 1852, from which Augustus includes a substantial excerpt.

Later Augustus refers to a letter from Archer to Kingsley, which states ‘I have left Soho from pecuniary motives - I was living entirely on my mother.’ Augustus also mentions a letter from Canon Nugent Wade dated 2 March 1888 about Archer’s time in Soho, presumably in response to a letter he had written. Canon Wade, who had been Vicar of St Anne’s when Archer was one of the first curates there, replied ‘I shall be delighted to see your *Memoir* of one whom I so highly esteemed and valued.’

# Archer and Tennyson; 1854-55 (Chapter XXVIII)

Archer had attacked his critics in *Spring*, but having done that he was not going to let the matter rest. ‘No sooner had it become evident that *Spring*, the well-loved volume of early poetry, was blighted, mishandled, and left for dead by the critics, than its cruelly disappointed author gave vent to his feelings in verse’ in *The Transcendentalists* (Gurney 1853a, 1855b). The term ‘Transcendentalist’ at the time was mostly used to describe a strain of Romanticism amongst writers in mid-19th century New England. Archer deployed it with reference to Scott, Southey, Wordsworth and Coleridge (Frothingham 1880, 76, 82), and members of the ‘Spasmodic’ school, whose introspective verse dramas of the 1840s and 1850s in his view ‘transcended sense, rhythm, taste and feeling.’ Tennyson’s *Maud* is also attacked (Gurney 1855b, 2-4) and elsewhere Archer describes that poem as ‘morbid and silly’ and states ‘there is not an impulsive line in it.’

> ‘There are, of course, poems by Transcendentalists. It is less certain that there is such a thing as Transcendental poetry, at least as a meaningful category….. The category never caught on, however, and the term Transcendental poetry now causes more confusion than clarification’ (Folsom 2010).

The title page of *The Transcendentalists* includes a short quotation from *Maud*, which is included because Archer probably considered these lines to

be amongst the worst in the whole poem: -

‘And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat
The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain.’

In one of his *Teuton Forest Echoes*, Archer wrote ‘We English have well-nigh lost the faculty of appreciation just at present, for such simple lyrics as Uhland’s. We expect something more highly-spiced and passionate, of the nature of *Maud*, or *Aurora Leigh*, and are apt to count true feeling tame, and slow. This is a temporary aberration from which we must ere long recover.’

Tennyson’s *Maud, and Other Poems* was published on 28 July 1855. On 25 August 1855 Tennyson wrote to George Granville Bradley saying that ‘poor *Maud* is to be slashed all to pieces by that mighty man, that pompholygous, broad-blown Apollodorus, the gifted X. Her best friends do not expect her to survive it! I am.’ No review of *Maud* by Archer is known, but the ‘gifted X’ is thought to refer to Archer (Lang and Shannon Jr 1987, 124 and 560). In a letter dated 6 December 1855 from Tennyson to Archer transcribed by Augustus in Chapter XX (*cf* Lang and Shannon Jr 1987, 137-8), Tennyson refers to his receipt of ‘a most bitter anonymous letter’ on the publication of *Maud*. This reads ‘Sir, I used to worship you, but now I hate you. I loathe and detest you. You beast! So you’ve taken to imitating Longfellow. Yours in aversion _____’) (Lang and Shannon Jr 1987, 199, fn2). Tennyson’s suspicion that this came from Archer was no doubt due to his receipt of some ‘angry’ letters from him, and thus the poet came to bear ‘an irreconcilable grudge against a poor mope [or moke] of a fellow called Archer Gurney’ (Howe 1934). Later Tennyson became convinced that Archer was not the anonymous letter-writer, and ‘if there were any little shadow of a quarrel between us, we have shaken hands.’

Archer had sent Tennyson his *Spring* (1853) and *The Ode of Peace* (1855). The copy of *Love’s Legends* (1845) in Birmingham University

Library was sent to Tennyson by Archer. In a letter to John Forster (8 August 1855) Tennyson says of Archer 'he seems to me the most unmagnanimous literary man I have ever known - if you know him and see him you may tell him that I am amazed at him' (Lang and Shannon Jr 1987, 120).

Augustus wrote that 'One line towards the close [of *The Transcendentalists*] …impresses me sadly: - 'The hour must come, and I can wait awhile' (Gurney 1855b, 23). The hour here spoken of is of course the hour of recognition. It did not come during the poet's lifetime. Will it come after death? I am foolish enough to fancy that it can matter to him even in Paradise.'

# Grillparzer; 1855-56 (Chapter XXXI)

This chapter includes translations and transcripts of Archer's letter to Grillparzer written in 1855 from Baden Baden and Grillparzer's reply. In it Archer wrote 'I became a clergyman some six years ago, but have not resigned on that account the office of poet; indeed it seems to me that all that is really beautiful must contribute to the benefit of Christianity as of Christians.'

Archer became firmly opposed to the war against Russia in the Crimea, and both Archer and Augustus are corresponding with Cobden who was also against it. Augustus suggested to Archer that he should write an *Ode of Peace* and he 'carried it out in a tornado.' The draft was finished in just two or three days. 'The task is to convince a nation it is in the wrong and without that irritating it.' Archer had the *Ode* in draft by 12 November 1855, and by 30 November it was in print. It was one of very few anti-war volumes to be published in that year (Tai-Chun 2016, 448).

# The Final Chapter; 1855 (Chapter XXXII)

The final chapter is almost entirely about *Iphigenia at Delphi*, based on a 'sketch' by Goethe of the Euripidean drama. Augustus describes the

argument of each Act, and then includes many quotes to illustrate what he considered to be the finer points of the work. Augustus sees this as Archer's greatest literary achievement, exceeding all of Shakespeare's works for 'sustained sublimity', a view that was shared by Wilfred Gurney in 1954 who refers to it as 'Perhaps Uncle Archer's greatest work.'

Archer intended to send Tennyson a copy, which he says is 'my most elaborate work, on which I would stake my reputation as a poet, which has been utterly ignored, or dismissed with a few words of quiet commonplace by our enlightened press.'

However, it was not well received. A review in *The Athenaeum* on 4 November 1855 stated 'The merits of the poem are minute; and the whole, while evincing the presence of much taste, is chiefly remarkable for the entire absence of genius.' Other comments were 'The language of the play throughout is faultily inverted and elliptical, and full of affected archaisms to a painful degree' and 'The play is almost utterly destitute of incident, and the poetry does not rise to the height required in the theory of Greek tragedy.'

Augustus wrote 'How full of grand things *Iphigenia at Delphi* is….that youth of genius which I have attempted to describe in this *Memoir* was not to fade into nothingness, though truly, after rising to a poetic climax, it was slowly and gradually to give up the vain contest with adversity.'

The chapter and the *Memoir* ends with the words 'Well might he exclaim 'Was ever poet treated as I have been treated!''

# Chapter 4
# The Rest of Archer's Life

## Buckingham; 1854-58

Having moved from Soho to St Peter and St Paul, Buckingham where he was senior curate with a couple of assistants, Archer was soon confined to bed with typhus, and thinking, gloomily, 'There is no room for you in the world. You have failed. The Age may be vile. You are not the man to turn it. Probably no man is' and 'A midsummer may not be granted to me' (Chapter XXX).

Archer applied for a passport in 1855 and in August he travelled with his mother to Baden Baden for a fortnight's holiday or rest cure. As he left Archer handed Augustus the manuscript of the second and enlarged edition of *The Transcendentalists* (Gurney 1855b). He wanted it to be published while *Maud* was still fresh, and if it proved to be successful then he hoped that his other works, *Iphigenia* and *Songs of the Present* would sell too. At this time he was working on *Songs of Early Summer* (Gurney 1856b).

Little is known of Archer's time in Buckingham before his final sermon in January 1858 followed by a farewell parish feast. In his sermons at Buckingham, Archer railed against the poverty, disease and neglect he had encountered in Soho. *Songs of Early Summer* was published (Gurney 1856b) with the usual mixed or generally unfavourable reviews.

## Paris; 1858-1870

The twelve years that Archer spent in Paris contrast significantly with the much shorter periods of time spent anywhere else on his return to England, so it was perhaps unfortunate that his time there was brought to an unexpected and premature end in 1870.

Following the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, Britons flocked to France, and three English Protestant churches were subsequently established in Paris. In 1824, Revd Lewis Way established the Marboeuf Chapel in a former picture gallery. In 1842 it was demolished and in 1844 it was replaced by another church at 10 Rue de Marboeuf which in turn was demolished in 1883. In 1856 the curate at the Marboeuf church was a certain Francis Pigou (1832-1916), and he was perhaps distantly related to Archer, whose maternal grandmother was Catherine Harriet Thompson (*née* Pigou) and her sister Harriet, the 'beautiful Miss Pigou' of Archer's childhood home in Tregony. The Marboeuf church subsequently became St George's (Harrison 2005). A second 'English Church', but a less active establishment at the time, was established in the Rue D'Agasseau.

Friends residing in Paris had urged Archer to move there and in 1858 he opened a new chapel at 17 Rue Madeleine in the Cour des Coches. In the first instance this appears to have been a temporary location, a drawing room in Archer's apartments, but with choral services and sermons 'in the purest French.' The aims of the church were firstly to supply the wants of a large English population and the children of mixed marriages (English-French or *vice versa*), with a service they could comprehend and, secondly, to represent the Church of England abroad in her true character as a branch of the Catholic Church, 'distinct alike from Roman superstition and Genevan error.' Archer was looking after between 2000 and 3000 English poor in the city. It was generally referred to as 'The Court Church', as it was in a court accessed from two roads (see below). Jerrold (1867, 25) describes the church thus: -

> Church of England (The Court Church). Entrances to the Church at 30 Fauborg Saint- Honoré and 35 Rue Boissy d'Anglais. Sunday Services at half-past eight, half-past eleven, half-past three and half-past seven. Young People's Service at ten in the morning. Daily Services at ten and three. Rev. Archer Gurney, chaplain.

In *An Interesting Centenary* Archer's services were described as 'feeble imitations of the ritual of the Roman Catholic Church, serving only to provoke the ridicule of Roman Catholics.' (Bate 1934). Also, that in the church in Europe, part of the Diocese of London, 'Few clergy held a bishop's licence; none was subject to real supervision.' In these circumstances, Archer was probably able to do exactly as he pleased, which was undoubtedly to his liking. It is said elsewhere that people in his congregation (his 'brethren') were moved to tears by being able to participate in the Lord's Prayer, and thereby enjoy a deeper sense of fellowship (Gurney 1874, 82-83, 86). The services were in French, including the sermon and prayers, and they were musical (*ibid.*).

Archer and his congregation were very much engaged with helping the poor. As well as visiting, transport to church was provided, well-behaved church-going children were rewarded, there was a clothing society and a provident fund. In one month, more than 250 English people described as 'distressed' were helped.

From the outset, the chapel's finances appear to have been precarious, with Archer paying the rent for the building out of his own pocket. It is hard to understand how Archer was able to survive financially, especially after his marriage to Elise on 14 August 1860 and the birth of their first child Gerald in 1862. Archer does not appear to have inherited much wealth; when his father Richard died in 1843 'He had little to bequeath to his children in the shape of worldly goods. He still clung to the hope of some good arising to us from the IOU from the 'Earl of S.', but as a matter of fact it never proved to be worth the paper it was written on.'

In 1860 the chapel's income was £450 and expenses £620. This led Archer, who seems to have only received a pittance and given much of his income to the poor (*Oxoniensis* 1864, 470), to announce his imminent departure. A committee was formed to manage the church finances and two appeals for funds in 1861 raised £444 and £56. Even if the finances

improved temporarily the future remained uncertain; some members of the committee felt it necessary to distance themselves to the point of resignation from some of Archer's opinions which had appeared in print, and which the Archbishop of Canterbury deemed had misrepresented the doctrines of the Church of England. The four main issues of contention appear to have been prayers for the dead, the Real Presence, the Eucharistic sacrifice and the eternity of punishment.

1862 and 1864 saw further appeals for funds, and in some years the church achieved an income of £1000. By 1864 Archer was receiving £200 p.a. In 1867 the church was still in need of financial help and once again Archer announced his imminent departure and the closure of the church due to its uncertain tenure. This appears to have been resolved, with a lease secured until 1870 when other far more significant matters in Paris were to intervene.

Archer appears to have had some ambitious ideas to expand his empire in Paris. In 1858 and again in 1861 there were plans to purchase or build a new church, and in 1862 to open a Boys' School attached to the English Church. Many curates in England supplemented their meagre incomes by taking on pupils to educate. In 1865 he was trying to establish 'The Anglican Working Brothers of S. Benedict', a new order of Anglican Benedictines run on strictly Church of England principles with no adoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary or reservation of The Sacrament. None of these projects appear to have come to fruition.

Some two years after Archer had opened his church, he was made to close it in 1860 on the grounds of a lack of formal permission and/or the 'disorderly conduct' of those attending. Both were probably pretexts for Catholic opposition to the chapel where Archer was delivering Anglican services and preaching on Anglican themes to the poor in French and English (Gurney 1860d). Archer sought support from the British Embassy and petitioned the Emperor Louis Napoleon. After a short hiatus the chapel reopened, but without the controversial service for children in French which

seems to have been the main point of contention.

On 14 August 1860 Archer and Elise married in London. Between August and October when Archer was away from Paris on honeymoon and presumably in this country, Augustus, still at that time a curate, stood in for him.

In 1866 Archer wrote an article on ‘Parisian Manners’ for the English *Macmillan’s Magazine* (Gurney 1866c) in which he is highly critical of the French people and their church services and how they look down on the English. He ends with a diatribe on the coarseness, brutality and poverty of the English working classes and how an increase in suffrage might improve things.

In 1867 Archer was being spoken of as the possible next Bishop of Gibraltar (*Dundee Courier* 19 June 1867 *et al*), but the source of this information appears to have been the Paris correspondent of the *John Bull* publication who just happened to have been a certain Archer Gurney!

On 21 June 1867 Archer was one of four leaders of a deputation petitioning the Czar of Russia, who was visiting Napoleon, on behalf of English residents in Paris. This was just two weeks after the failed attempt to assassinate the Czar.

The most recent mention of Archer in print is in Michael Palin’s *Great-Uncle Harry. A Tale of War and Empire* (2023, 36). This recounts how in October 1867 Archer was present and possibly officiating at the marriage of Edward Palin to Brita Gallagher in the chapel of the British Embassy (Palin 2023, 36). However the suggested link between the Palin and Gurney families, with Archer having a brother Henry married to an Eleanor Palin cannot be correct, as Archer had no brother of that name. Curiously a Henry Palin Gurney was ordained in 1871 and worked amongst the poor in Rotherhithe, London as Archer had in Soho (Fletcher 1904).

In 1868 Archer was giving financial aid to families whose income may well have exceeded his own but where the women and children were living ‘in extreme destitution’ due to the profligacy of the male breadwinner.

During his time in Paris Archer appears to have remained involved in church politics in England. On 14 June 1866 at the Seventh Anniversary of the English Church Union (ECU) Archer, a member, crossed swords with Dr Edward Bouverie Pusey and his supporters over the question of union of the Church of England with Rome. Archer had proposed an amendment to a resolution by the Vice-President Revd W. Gresley which sought to welcome Dr Pusey's letter, the first of his three *Eirenicons* or proposals to achieve peace. This argued that the Pope should have supremacy over the Church of England with the ECU committed 'apparently to union with Rome on the basis of the Council of Trent.' The meeting was rendered memorable when Archer's remarks describing the Eirenicon as 'a most dangerous book' and Pusey as 'a Gallician on the wrong side of the water' were met with hisses, uproar and interruptions. Only three votes were cast in support of his amendment. Not only was Dr Pusey there but he had just been elected a Vice-President so 'When, therefore, Mr Gurney attacked him [Pusey] by name, he at once roused the anger of the Romanizers' and [Pusey] was given a magnificent ovation when he rose to correct Archer's misapprehension (Walsh 1898, 332-3, Bayfield Roberts 1895, 79-80). The disagreement does not appear to feature in other published works on the Oxford Movement, so although it was 'an unfortunate controversy' it does not appear to have been of much significance.

In September 1868 Archer was already thinking of leaving Paris, and finding someone to take on the running of the church. In 1869, perhaps anticipating his next move, he was preaching at various locations in London.

In April 1870 he once again announced his intention to leave Paris and return to England, and in July his successor was announced. In August a collection for his leaving present was being organised; £200 was raised.

According to Scott, Sybella was born on 6 July 1870 (Scott *et al* 2007, 467), although family tradition holds that Archer and his family crossed the English Channel in an open boat on the same day that Napoleon III was

captured at the Battle of Sedan (2 September 1870). That left the road to Paris open and by 19 September the city was encircled.

The 1871 census gives Sybella's age as nought which suggests a birth date between 1 April 1870 and 2 April 1871. The family comprising Archer, Eliza, Gerald, Vivian, Archer Evelyn and Sybella were staying at that time (April 1871) with Elise's mother, Sybella Hammett, at 24 Marine Parade, Worthing, along with four French servants (three from one family, the Coynets, and a wet nurse) all of whom must have fled with the family from Paris.

An obituary records that Archer 'remained at his post as English chaplain to the last and escaped with great difficulty, losing all his portable belongings.' Dickens (1870) gives a detailed account of British citizens fleeing from Paris, including 'babes at the breast', and Horne confirms that the railways refused to accept any luggage (1965, 66). Most English residents seem to have left Paris during the last week of August and first two weeks of September 1870, crossing the Channel on mail steamboats to English ports. By this time the city was rapidly filling up with refugees from the suburbs and the military, and foreigners were increasingly at risk from 'spy-mania' and being shot (Horne 1965, 166). There was a second exodus of foreigners in mid-November (Kranzberg 1950, 66). The British Embassy in Paris had closed and moved to Tours on 18 September.

Some 900 British citizens left Paris before the siege, leaving around 4000 in the city (Horne 1965, 169). Unlike Archer, some clergy, for example those of the Marbouef Chapel, remained to attend to the needs of their greatly reduced congregations, there being few Protestants left in the city.

It also seems that the flight from Paris resulted in a brief and unusual interruption to Archer's letters to the media, and there appears to be nothing from him published between 27 August and 14 October 1870. It therefore seems likely that Archer and the family left Paris at the very start of September, perhaps on or around 2 September, with Sybella then around two months old. That cannot have been on the last train out of Paris, as rail

connections were not severed until mid-September (Kranzberg 1950, 29) when the city was encircled. After that only very few British subjects managed to escape with a permit to pass through the French and Prussian lines (Horne 1965, 169-70).

True to form, Archer did not forget the impact that the events of 1870 might have had upon those less fortunate than himself, and in December of that year he was involved in a London-based Refugees Benevolent Fund to support refugees from France. By August 1871 Archer's chapel in Paris had closed and in 1872 it was turned into a gymnasium. Much later, in 1883, Archer was described as having been 'the only man of mark in Parisian Anglicanism' (*The Times*, 20 December 1883).

# England and Wales; 1870-1887

Back in England Archer delivered sermons and lectures far and wide. He then held a succession of clerical positions (curacies) or locums, but none for any length of time; 'drifting from one place to another' and 'He never cared to settle down for any length of time to the dull routine of an English parish.' This was not unusual; most curates led a nomadic life, usually staying in any one position for around two years.

On several occasions Archer advertised publicly in the media for a position, a practice that was far from uncommon. Positions held briefly by Archer include :-

- St Wilfrid's church, Kibworth, Leics (1871-72)
- Holy Trinity Church, Westminster (evening lecturer 1872-74)
- St Matthew's church, Bayswater (1874)
- St Peter's church, Bayswater
- Trinity Church/Chapel, Brighton (evening lecturer 1874)
- St Patrick's church, Brighton (1875)
- Holy Trinity church, Malvern (1875)
- St Luke's, church Southampton (1876)

- St Mary's church, Castlegate, York (locum 1877)
- St Andrew's 'Iron Church' Hastings (locum 1877-78)
- St Wilfrid's church, Kibworth, Leics again (locum 1878)
- Holy Trinity church, Lambeth (1879)
- St Andrew's Tavistock Place (1879)
- St Katharine's Hospital, London (1879-80)
- St Clement's church, Rhayader, Radnorshire ('Clerk in Orders and curate in charge' 1880-81)
- St Cynydr's church, Llangunider, Brecon (1882-83)
- St Barnabas' church Pimlico (1884)
- St Stephen's church, South Kensington (1884)

Such itinerancy was to be expected, with curates taking employment as and when it became available in parishes where the incumbent's stipend afforded them the luxury of employing an assistant on a meagre salary to undertake most if not all of the work. Reasons why an incumbent might want to do this included illness, old age or retirement.

No doubt an important consideration on Archer's return to England, now with a wife and family, would have been to secure appropriate accommodation attached to any new position. If the incumbent was not in residence for whatever reason, the curate might well have been able to live in the rectory or vicarage. The 1861 and 1871 censuses do not help us, but in Hastings in 1879 Archer was *locum tenens* during the absence of the incumbent and residing in Trinity Vicarage. There, single-handedly and with 'such energy and zeal', Archer was conducting twenty services every week. It also seems that his presence there was in anticipation of acquiring the incumbency, subject to 'proper money conditions' (*Kent & Sussex Courier*, 26 April 1878), although that was not to be.

In 1874 *Words of Faith and Cheer* was published. The *British Quarterly Review* wrote that the volume 'Speaks of many questions with a wise judgement and fearless honesty, as well as with an intellectual strength and

broad human catholicity, which commands respect.' As the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* notes, this work, unlike many of his others 'obtained a well-deserved popularity.' Whatever the print run, only three copies have been found in accessible libraries, Cambridge University, the Bodleian Library and the British Library.

At this point it is worth considering this particular volume in greater detail, as it stands out in sharp contrast to the rest of Archer's publications. The copy that was consulted by the writer in Cambridge University Library (*Special Collections* 1874.7.589) had been acquired by the Library in 1874 but the pages had never been cut, suggesting that it had never been requested or, if it had, it had never been opened and read.

The book is inscribed to the Revd John Robbins and the congregation of St Peter's church, Bayswater, with the best wishes of the missioner, Archer. It is recorded that at Eastertide in this church Archer was the celebrant at Mattins and Holy Communion and preacher at choral Evensong (Davies 1875, 273-4).

The twenty-four topics in the volume were thirty-minute lectures delivered by Archer, but not *extempore*, contrary to his usual custom, three on each of eight weekday evenings at 8pm in the weeks preceding Lent. The original plan was for thirty lectures over ten days, but it was felt necessary to stop after twenty-four to allow a brief respite before Lenten activities commenced. Collectively they constitute a handbook on the scope and true meaning of the Christian revelation, and how to live as a Christian in various circumstances, including as husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, parents, young men and women and servants. Archer and the clergy in general were said to regard servants as one of the most valuable and important classes of the country, principally because they necessarily exhibit such remarkable self-control (Gurney 1874, 201ff).

While some of the topics address those at the lower end of Victorian society, the lectures do assume that the listeners are educated sufficient to follow Archer's train of thought and to know, for example, the meanings of

Swedenborgianism (Gurney 1874, 40) or Arianism (*ibid*. 58). Archer also includes an interesting discourse on how one might travel from London to Croydon on the main highway or by means of country lanes and fields, to make the point that there is more than one way to reach Heaven (*ibid*. 196).

The lectures clearly gave Archer the opportunity to express his views on a wide range of topics, and he had harsh words about slang, the decline in poetical aspiration and knowledge of English literature (specifically Tennyson, Browning, Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Southey) in favour of boating and cricket, the foolery and vulgarity of the theatre, the decline in good manners and class division in cities. He bemoaned the fact that two decades previously people studied Schiller, Victor Hugo, Tasso, Ariosto and, of course, Grillparzer and Goethe.

In assessing the significance of *Words of Faith and Cheer* today, anyone reading Archer's other volumes and the *Memoir* would probably conclude that he was a minor and not very successful poet who also happened to be a clergyman. This volume, *Words*, shows that in the latter role he was grounded, pragmatic and, for the time, unusually sensitive to the trials and tribulations in the lives of the lower classes and the congregations in the churches in which he served.

While at Hastings in 1877-78 Archer founded, owned and edited a twopenny literary and religious journal *The Hastings World*. No copies have been located. The sub-editor was Mr Charles F. Baker, later to become the Chief Constable for the Borough. It proved to be a loss-maker, although it seems unlikely that Archer's main motivation was financial. It was said that the editorial articles and contributions were of high order of merit, but after six months it died from 'over-cleverness.' In 1877 he delivered a sermon to the Brighton Branch of the English Church Union, and in 1878 a paper before the Junior Clerical Society of Brighton.

In 1878 there was a serious falling-out with the incumbent when Archer, as 'chief priest of the High Church', made some controversial and possibly illegal changes to the services and supposedly disregarded the authority of

his bishop. Archer had also used the local media to his advantage, and significantly increased the congregation. It was said that ‘He understood the power of personal popularity. The doctor is so amiable that he leaves his patients without even the heart to cry out at the nastiness of his physic. When Mr Gurney lectures and preaches his hearers forget almost the ceremonies he practices and the doctrines he teaches’ (*Hastings and St Leonards Observer* 23 March 1878).

When he left Hastings, the parishioners raised £50 and presented Archer with a portrait by the artist Edwin Davis (1819-1884) and a carriage clock. Thereafter the church was little used, and soon after Archer’s departure it was abandoned.

In 1881 Archer was a member of the Consultative Council of the National Fair-Trade League, and he published an account in the *Church Times* of two visitations by angels. One incident occurred when he was at Buckingham, when a dying child had a vision of ‘a beautiful man who is standing there and waiting for me.’ The second also involved a dying child, beams of light and a vision of Jesus and two angels (*North Devon Journal* 30 November 1882). Archer’s grandmother had heard angelic singing on her death bed (Chapter V).

We have seen that Archer had ‘an extreme love of music’ (Chapter I), ‘Archer’s love of music amounted to a passion’ (Chapter XXII), ‘Every now and then he [Archer] would throw off an Opera libretto at a heat’ (Chapter XIX) and ‘I may mention that melodies came to my brother at will, but he had no knowledge of thorough bass’ (Chapter XXIII). In Chapter III, Augustus mentions that Archer was going to learn the guitar, to accompany his grandmother on the pianoforte. He also wrote enthusiastically about the merits of English composers, including William Sterndale Bennett, George Alexander Macfarren, John Bacchus Dykes, John Field, Andre Georges Louis Onslow and Henry Hugh Pierson (Gurney 1881).

Archer appears to have written two hymn tunes: ‘Chesham’ (*Cyber*

*Hymnal* 11820) http://www.hymntime.com/tch and 'Cecil' (*Voices of Praise* 1883, no. 237). He was also an accomplished hymnist, contributing no fewer than 147 hymns to *A Book of Praise* (Gurney 1862b; Appleyard 1990, 21). Of all his hymns, only two proved to be popular and remain in use since. 'Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen!' (1862, with music by Arthur Sullivan in 1874), was published in no less than seventy-nine hymnals. Another set to music by Sullivan was 'The awful noontide gloom is o'er' (1862). 'Come, Ye Lofty, Come, Ye Lowly' (Gurney and Elliott Burton 1900), captures and distils the essence of many 19th-century carols (Appendix 5). In the preface to one collection of hymns it is said that Archer's hymns 'are not generally found in popular hymn books' (Shipley 1864, xv). The third verse of 'Christ is Risen' is incised on Archer's memorial (see below).

Jones (1903, 122-4) wrote of 'Christ is Risen!' that

> 'This hymn was first published in a little volume of original and collected hymns, entitled *A Book of Praise*, compiled by Mr Gurney in 1860. The compiler's own copy, which he used when chaplain of the Court Church, Paris, is beside me as I write, having been sent to me by a relative of the late hymnist [possibly Miss S[ybella] Gurney (Jones 1903, vi)]. 'Christ is risen!' appears in the author's collection in a somewhat different form from that in many hymnals. Indeed, the frequency with which Mr Gurney's fine hymn has been altered, sometimes with his leave, but more often without, was a source of considerable distress to the author. On more than one occasion he remarked that if an editor thought 'Christ is risen!' a sufficiently good hymn to insert in his collection, he wished he would print it as written, or leave it alone altogether.'

Other hymn texts by Archer not mentioned above and listed on Hymnary.org include:-

- Evermore their lauds the Angel hosts are singing
- High above a star is shining
- Now to God on high be glory
- Silence in the house of prayer
- The day of Pentecost

In 1882 Archer expressed interest in the Bishopric of the 'Diocese of Northern Europe' but he was not appointed.

Archer's penultimate position was as Clerk in Orders and Curate in Charge at Rhayader in Radnorshire (now Powys) in 1880-81, most probably at St Clement's church. Archer's appointment to this parish may be accounted for by the likelihood that he and the incumbent Revd Laugharne were previously acquainted. They had both been at Buckingham in 1855, and similar connections may also explain Archer's appointment to other parishes in which he served.

The vicar was Revd Thomas Laugharne who was then around sixty years old. We know that between 1873 and 1891 he was elsewhere, as Vicar of St Thomas' church at Llandwrog (Carnarvonshire). It is recorded that in January 1881 Archer was *locum tenens* at the vicarage from whence he was writing letters on the unlawfulness of prayer to the Virgin Mary or any other creature (*Llangollen Advertiser*, 7 November 1884).

The Gurney household of ten in the Vicarage comprised Archer and Elise, Vivian and Sybella, plus a German governess (presumably for Sybella, then age ten), a Swiss lady's maid, other servants from London, Buckinghamshire and Wales and a boarder.

The town was famous for the 'Rebecca Riots' of 1843 against high toll charges and there were further violent incidents in 1880 against water bailiffs and their houses when they sought to stop poaching on the River Wye.

His final position was forty or so miles away as curate at Llangunider (Llangynidr), Breconshire in 1882-83 (most probably SS Cynidr and Mary

(destroyed 1928)). At the time, Llangunider was dominated by collieries, quarries and an ironworks. In November 1882 Archer preached ‘a very eloquent sermon’ following a service of confirmation in the nearby town of Llangelly (Llanelly) (*North Wales Express* 24 November 1882). It is not known if Archer was able to speak Welsh; most probably not. In May 1883, Archer was writing letters to the editor of the *Western Mail* (21 May 1883) from Llangynidr Rectory.

Between 1883 and 1887 Archer was living in retirement at 7 Keble Terrace in Oxford. With him were his wife Elise and possibly also their son Evelyn who was to tragically end his own life there in 1895.

In his later years Archer who had once been described as an ‘enfant terrible’ seems to have promoted several controversial causes. In 1883 he supported the Deceased Wife’s Sister Marriage Bill, which eventually passed into law in 1907 after sixty-five years of wrangling. In that same year Archer wrote to a John Bentley asking for ‘100 copies of ‘the Letter’ and reporting that he had sent another review. The letter referred to may have been the article published by *The Churchman’s Union* (Gurney 1883) about the Bill. In the following year, 1884, Archer was advocating that the Houses of Commons and Lords should sit not only in London but in Dublin, York, Exeter, Norwich and Chester in rotation. He also continued to write articles and submit poems to, for example, *The Church of England Pulpit and Ecclesiastical Review* and he may have briefly come out of retirement to work on an occasional basis at St Barnabas’ church, Pimlico, and St Stephen’s church, South Kensington.

# Death and burial; 1887

In September 1886 Archer, Elise, and Evelyn are recorded as staying at the Manor House Hotel, Leamington Spa, now the Manor House Regal Hotel. Archer’s last will and testament had been drawn up on 2 December 1876 with ‘my dear brother’ Augustus and his [Augustus’] children as beneficiaries. ‘My own dear children are already amply provided for.’

Despite his increasing ill-health Archer remained active in Oxford in 1886/7 delivering, *inter alia*, a lecture on 'Life in Germany' to the Oxford Churchmen's Union. He also participated in if not organised an event to promote the founding of the Oxford Band of Mercy, the aim of which was to encourage goodwill to all creatures. Archer's last sermon was probably delivered on 23 January 1887 in St Paul's church, Oxford, as a memorial to the Late Lord Iddesleigh, Sir Stafford Northcote, 1st Earl of Iddesleigh (1818-1887). He gave what was probably his last lecture on 28 February in the Town Hall, Oxford, on 'Fair Trade.' His last letter to be published in the media was on 5 March 1887 on the topic of the Oxford Fair Trade League.

Archer was one of the ninety-eight contributors to the drinking fountain and memorial to Dante Gabriel Rossetti unveiled in July 1887 in Chelsea Embankment Gardens. Both Dante and his sister, Christina, were devout High Anglicans, so Archer may well have been acquainted with the family.

Archer died at the Castle Hotel in Bath on 21 March 1887 from a disease of the kidneys, having gone there from Oxford twelve days beforehand to take the waters and see his doctor. He had been in poor health for several years but his final period of illness was brief; the extreme and persistent cold spell at the time may well have hastened his end. He was buried on 23 March 1887 at St Mary's church, Bathwick, near Bath, Somerset.

His memorial inscription reads as follows: -

In
Loving memory of

ARCHER GURNEY
WHO DIED MARCH 21st 1887.
PRIEST. POET. THEOLOGIAN.

EVERY END WHICH MAN DESCRIES
IS A BEGINNING EVERMORE. A. G.

GOD IS LOVE.

BUT THE SOULS OF THE RIGHTEOUS ARE IN THE HAND OF GOD, AND THERE SHALL NO TORMENT TOUCH THEM

GIVE HIM ETERNAL PEACE, O LORD AND
LET PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON HIM.

A.G.
BORN JULY 15. 1820.

This is followed by some of the lines from verse three of ‘Christ is Risen!’, possibly the most popular of his many hymns.

Glorious angels downward thronging
Hail the Lord of all the skies;
Heaven, with joy and holy longing
For the Word incarnate, cries,
‘Christ is risen! Earth, rejoice!
Gleam, ye starry train!
All creation, find a voice:
He o’er all shall reign.

Archer’s death was widely reported in the newspapers of the day. Obituaries record that he was ‘a most original thinker, a High Churchman with broad and liberal sympathies, that he had the courage of his opinions which he expressed as authoritatively as if he was a Pope, but with a bonhomie which never gave offence. With an attraction about his writings, a wideness of sympathy in his opinions which drew to him the minds of his contemporaries, his death will come home to many like the loss of an old

friend.'

Probate was granted to Archer's sole executor Augustus on 5 May 1887. The value of Archer's estate was £2,129 6s 2d, the equivalent of around £141,000 today.

As a postscript, in 1905 there was a further rather curious memorial to Archer in the form of a three-panel *opus sectile* mosaic in the apse of St George's church, Paris, depicting Christ supported by the archangels St Michael and St Gabriel (Hadley n.d.). This, by James Powell & Sons of London, was a gift to the value of £250 to the church from Archer's widow and children (*The Times*, 2 May 1905). Similar mosaics are found elsewhere, notably on the island of Torcello. Why this should have been arranged in 1905 is a mystery, but it was certainly an appropriate location; St George's was a fine Victorian Gothic Anglo-Catholic church and had been a centre for Anglican-Roman Catholic ecumenism. It had also succeeded the Protestant Marboeuf Chapel, which had links with the Pigou family, and Archer is described in some sources as being a chaplain there. The church was demolished in 1973. This final family tribute to Archer was described as follows: -

> 'To his memory his widow and children have made this offering, which is worthy testimony to the work of one who strove not for popularity (though few have been more widely loved) but for the Catholic Faith as he understood it' (*Morning Post* 2 May 1905).

# Chapter 5
# *Memoir of the Reverend Archer Gurney*
# by Augustus Gurney

## Chapter I
## Childhood at Tregony
## 1820-1827

I have been asked by her who has the best ~~right to~~ claim to my services to write a *Memoir* of my brother Archer Thompson Gurney, priest, poet, and theologian, practically known through life as Archer Gurney. Except that I possess but slight literary aptitude - an exception not without weight - I suppose that in some respects the task could hardly fall into more suitable hands; for my brother and I have been lifelong friends and correspondents and, although my memory is not less faulty than tenacious, a diary that I have kept for very many years cannot fail to be helpful. Would that my brother had jotted down some memoranda for my guidance; would, in particular, that he had at the least written his own impressions of his childhood and boyhood; but - so far as I am aware - not a scrap of autobiography will be forthcoming save such as has taken the occasional form of verse. So then, for the period of childhood and boyhood I shall be mainly dependent on my own memory assisted by a packet or two of thrice ~~dear old~~ precious letters, some of which are fifty years old and more. It is plain to me that no one but myself could write the early chapters of this *Memoir*: and that consideration shall make me set about my task the more unhesitatingly, ~~Later on~~ - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - ~~and skilful literary aid may be has recourse to~~ and I earnestly trust that it may fall to my lot to complete it. Ill health makes this doubtful. When I begin this *Memoir* in the summer

of 1887, the year of Queen Victoria's Jubilee, but few months have passed since my brother's death, and I have hardly yet got over the first great shock which that death occasioned me. The words of his last sorrowful telegram are still before my eyes, 'Come to me: I need comfort.' But all that shall be told - if I ever get so far - in its due time and place. Now I have to deal with the earthly beginning, and not with the earthly end - which also in its way is a beginning.

I suppose that, after the fashion of biographers, I ought to preface what I have to say about the subject of this *Memoir* by some short account of our (our seems to me, on the whole, more convenient here than either *my* or his, the only alternatives) parents. I grant the awkwardness, but don't see my way out of it. On consideration, I shall have recourse to our, my, his, as may seem best at the moment, father and mother; but if I even go back so far as to grandfathers and grandmothers, I daresay no harm will be done. It is the regular routine, and not without interest. Though strong in ancestry I will in mercy spare. ~~Our his~~ Our father was Richard Gurney of Trewinion House, Tregony, Cornwall, a barrister, who for a few years filled an honourable and fairly lucrative post, that of Vice Warden of the Stannaries. I think his court was held in Plymouth; and I know that the cases which came into his court were one and all connected with mines. It was his boast that not a single decision of his had been appealed against. Unless I am mistaken the office is one that has been done away. I am pretty sure that the Prince of Wales was in those days Warden of the Stannaries, in his capacity of Duke of Cornwall. ~~Our His~~ Our mother, Catherine Harriet Gurney, was the only surviving daughter of the Revd Archer Thompson, ~~Vicar of Thatcham, Berks~~ an eloquent lecturer at the Foundling, the Magdalen Penitentiary, and other London churches, much admired by the then Royal family and marked out it was said for a bishopric when cut off by early death. His widow, our Grand~~mama~~ mother Thompson, was dearly loved by us. After her husband's death, though no recluse, she never again went into general

society, or quite held up her head. Her letters, some of which are in my possession, half printed and beautifully written, are bright and affectionate. As I recall her, her handsome and regular features were surmounted by a much befrilled cap, whilst she wore round her neck a double frilled collar. Her costume varied as little as might be, her waist coming very high up. Her expression was one of great contentment and peace. I suppose no one ever loved flowers more than she did. She was a good musician and was untiring in playing to us children Bishop's delightful music, then all the rage. My brother's extreme love of music - inherited also from both parents - is greatly due to her. She lived with us to old age, finally dying on the Continent at Neuwied. Towards the close of her life one little peculiarity is perhaps worth mentioning. Her travelling days having begun late in life, might seem to have ~~produced~~ exercised on her the more disturbing impression, for she thus accounted for a habit of taking to bed her entire stock of pocket handkerchiefs: 'You know, my dear, one can never tell where one may wake up in the morning.' Her common-place book, long existent but now lost, contained little Archer's childish letters and first attempts at rhyme. They were her treasure and would be invaluable to me.

~~Our father's~~ For convenience' sake I have given precedence to my mother's parents. I now come to my father's side of the family. Our father's father was for many years the Rector of Tregony in Cornwall and held various pieces of preferment besides. Those were the days of pluralities; and it was a pleasantry of his to invite any unsuspecting friend to meet at dinner the Vicar of this place, and the Curate of that, the Chaplain of the Lord Lieutenant, the Chaplain of the Work-House, &c. &c, he uniting those various offices in his own person. He was devout, but I have never heard that he was remarkably talented, and I imagine that he owed several pieces of preferment to a capacity for electioneering. If so, the Nemesis which overtook his son, our father, in the matter of elections - to be related hereafter - may be held accounted for. Our Grand~~mama~~mother Gurney,

petite and alert, was a very sensible old lady, with pretty white hair who, when her husband faltered from old age, used to provide him with one or two Sunday sermons, transcribing these when necessary from books, and even filling up gaps with her own composition - which last I apprehend - would not be free from a Calvinistic strain. She was however a devout churchwoman of her day, and, as I well remember, observed a rule of fasting absolutely on Good Friday until after sunset.

Great happiness befell the old people when their son brought down his handsome bride, after a run-away match, to Trewinion House. ~~He had courted our mother at Bath~~. The scene of courtship had been the Assembly Rooms in Bath. Our father was singularly good-looking and endowed with a great charm of manner. He was clever, and ought to have done greater things in several respects than he accomplished. As regards literature, his fastidiousness was a hindrance; he was over critical of his own work and could never satisfy himself. He was much older than ~~our mother~~ his wife, but a powerful and active man, and everywhere a most welcome guest. I feel that this is a very inadequate description ~~of our talented father~~ but will add no more now. Why then had ~~our mother's~~ Miss Thompson's guardians or trustees objected to him? I might answer, 'When do guardians fail to oppose their ward's suitor if to ~~object~~ oppose be at all possible?' but I will be candid. Those guardians then, objected because ~~our father he~~ the ~~lover~~ suitor was reputed to be fond of high play, and also because he was held to be extravagant. Many gentlemen were these things in the days when George the IV was Regent. Well, when ~~our father~~ the happy husband brought down to Cornwall his young wife, an heiress, full of brightness and good sense - in spite of the run-away match - all Tregony went wild about her, and not least her kind old father-in-law. He lived a happy year or two after her coming - life being sweetened for him by her pretty attentions; and when, at the end of the first year the subject of this *Memoir* was born, his joy knew no bounds, The question of Christian names was settled ~~by a [ ] de main~~ in

a trice; and the object being to bring about a reconciliation with the Thompson family, the two Christian names devised were Archer Thompson; and so set on this was our grand-father, that he baptised the infant - then in perfect health - by those names within an hour or two of his birth. Happy birth, say I, in spite of the so recent sad ending; happy birth, in spite of troubles and disappointments to come; for together with sorrow and failure God sent much of happiness and of usefulness to sweeten that infant's lot.

Old Mrs Gurney ~~our father's mother~~ was much delighted on the whole with the good sense and good looks and fortune of her daughter-in-law. In any trifling differences that arose between the newly married couple she somewhat blindly - to ~~our father's~~ her son's amusement - took her daughter-in-law's side, saying: 'You know, Richard, that your wife is always right.' This was as it should be; and yet all was not absolute sunshine. Having indoctrinated her son's wife, who was ~~only 17~~ under 18 when married, and totally inexperienced, with her ideas of managing a household, she was, I have understood, just a little nettled when, more or less, the inevitable hour struck of emancipation; yet to her dying day she used to congratulate Richard on the happy choice he had made: so, short of perfection, all was well.

Trewinion House, situated at the top of the village of Tregony, near the church, on the St Austell Road, was by no means a handsome building, but it was roomy. The house has been enlarged and is now in use as a Collegiate School of the Independents. In it besides ~~Grandmamas Gurney and Thompson~~ the two grandmothers, there lived in our childhood our mother's aunt, and consequently our great-aunt, Miss Pigou, who once was known as the beautiful Harriet Pigou, between whom and my brother there was a most tender and undying affection. No one could tell Jack-the-Giant Killer or Little-Red-Riding-Hood like her, nor would we endure the slightest variation in these and other narratives. She was at one time bedridden, and

then above all my brother never tired of her companionship. It will be seen that our home was a veritable old Damery.

These three old ladies, two of whom were sisters, agreed well in most things, and in particular they shared one weakness in common: fond as they were of the two remaining sons and the only daughter, they vied with each other in adoring little Archer the son and heir, and their admirations may not have been altogether good for him. Little Archer had an inquiring mind, and because his inquiries even when most inept were seriously entertained by those very dear old ladies, he became at times inquisitive to an aggravating extent. Having on one occasion plied ~~our~~ his father with ~~a hundred~~ fifty questions of slight importance, he attained a climax by picking up a straw and asking, 'What is this, Papa?' For answer he received a gentle tap on the head - this being the extreme chastisement our father - a passionate man - was ever known to inflict on his children, and therefore accounted all the more grave.

After Archer, ~~our~~ his sister Frances was the next to be born. Then came Augustus William, that is myself. And finally arrived Richard Henry Cornish, our youngest brother. The only date which it is of the faintest consequence to fix is that of Archer's birth, July 15th 1820, being the first year of the reign of George IV, when Scott was still pouring out his masterpieces; but I may mention that, roughly speaking, an interval of two years parted each one of us from the other.

A portion of every year was spent by ~~our father and mother~~ the heads of the family in London, or else in Brighton; but the country home which they kept up, whether present or absent, until England was exchanged for the Continent, was Trewinion House. We children sometimes migrated to town and back with ~~our parents~~ the elders. I think that ~~our~~ my father must have gone up to Town not unfrequently alone for a more or less prolonged stay.

We were a large and happy party who were left behind, and our mother was a most capable manager. All turned to her in every emergency great and small. It was Kitty here, and Kitty there, and Kitty everywhere. She ever shewed presence of mind, and rarely more so than when on one occasion she saved Miss Pigou's life. Our great-aunt set fire to her cap strings and standing stock-still screamed - which was probably the wisest course ~~she could~~ for her to take. ~~Our mother~~ Her niece flew upstairs and with her hands scuffled out the flames. A bad burn was inflicted on our great-aunt, and the helpful hands were blistered, but a serious misfortune was averted.

Tregony in our childhood was a cross between a big village and a small country town. It had a Mayor, and returned (a friend, A.J., reminds me that, before the Reform bill, every borough returned) two members to Parliament. My memory only serves me for one at Tregony. Did our neighbour, Lord Falmouth, return one member in perpetuity without contest; (or did Tregony form an exception to the rule?) being what was known as a rotten borough. ~~Three times~~ Twice or thrice our father essayed to become its member, standing in the Whig interest, and ~~three times~~ failed. The ~~third~~ last of these contested elections was complicated by what was technically called 'a double return' so far as I remember. Two men claimed to be the rightful Mayor, and one of these - by name Trinneman - declared Gurney to be returned, whilst the other affirmed Gordon to be the rightful member. All turned on ~~two or three~~ a very few votes to be allowed or disallowed. The case was tried before a Parliamentary Committee, pending whose decision both gentlemen sat I think, in the House of Commons without the privileges of speaking or voting. Mr Scarlett, afterwards Lord Abinger, was retained by our ~~father~~ side as ~~his~~ leading Counsel, but failed ~~him~~ us at the pinch, having to speak in another cause; the junior Counsel was unprepared; and Gordon proved triumphant. My brother and I remembered well the humours of one or more of the elections. Archer, having a good notion of speaking even as a child, made what was

considered a famous speech on the hustings, no doubt denouncing the Tories. Tregony however knew nothing of Whig or Tory, the battle cry being ‘Gurney’ or ‘Gordon.’ Mr Gilbert’s delightful lines were only applicable here with limitations:

I often think it comical
How Nature always does contrive
That every boy and every gal
That’s born into the world alive,
Is either a little Liberal,
Or else a little Conservative!

*Iolanthe.*

The motto of the voters (pot-boilers or potwallopers I think they were called) might have been ‘Men, not measures.’ ~~Feasting~~ Treating was carried on for many ~~days and~~ weeks at the cost of the candidates, and, great as was ~~our father’s~~ Gurney’s personal popularity, I suppose that the largest purse prevailed. To this day Tregony contains Gurney Row and Gordon Row, the object of each candidate having been to run up the greatest possible number of tenements, at a nominal rent, since the owner of every hearth was entitled to a vote. I can recall the indignation with which we children learnt that our band’s big drum had been broken by the foe. It appeared to us that our procession was the biggest, our flags the grandest, and our band the more inspiring. ~~Our~~ My father’s electioneering songs, for writing which he had a special knack, were capital, and in this respect Gordon was nowhere. My mother was thought to be very good at electioneering: I believe she once promised a kiss to a wavering voter, if her husband should be returned at the head of the poll. But for all that, Gordon was ~~always~~ successful.

I have recovered, for a wonder, an old

*Tregony Election Song*

~~evidently~~ apparently written and printed whilst the double return remained as yet undecided. I must ~~just~~ explain that the Gurneys of old were lords of Harptree, and that the Gordons' crest was a boar's head. 'Dickson' in the song stands for Richard, my father's name.

How sweet the harp when mountain-bard
Its trembling chords is sweeping!
How flourishing the stately tree
When summer dews are weeping!
Oh! the Harp-tree crest to the Wild-boar's head
Will ne'er its honors yield,
For the instant Gordon flings the glove,
Lo! Gurney takes the field.

Though the coney burrows where the towers
Of ancient Harp-tree frowned, Sir;
Though the thistle and rude bramble grow
Where its wide lawn stretched around, Sir;
Yet the page of History will show
How of erst, in the by-gone days,
The 'Harptree Gournays' flourished long,
And gained their Country's praise.

When Darlington, the 'Jockey Earl'
A Marquis since yclep'd Sir,
To prison seven electors sent,
And wives and children wept, Sir,
Kind Dickson turned the bitter cup
Of sorrow upside down,

Supported all, and soon restored
Each prisoner to our Town.

Ye Senators who guard the State,
One boon of you we pray
It is when our Petition's heard,
You'll give us but fair play;
For then we'll prove the Election held
By our legal Mayor, hath been
Annulled by as base a stratagem,
As e'er was heard or seen.

We'll prove how Sheriff Ned contrived,
Our true 'Return' to fob, Sirs,
And a false one substitute instead -
Oh! 'twas a dirty job! Sirs; -
How mean arts triumphed, Justice slept
How wrong usurped the right,
While all good faith and honor seemed
To bid the world good night!

Trewithon groves in whisper talk -
Trelucky falls speak foaming -
Gorse brooks are bubbling, while the Fal
With silent course is roaming;
But we in language plain, our wrongs
In the Commons-House soon showing,
Will whelm our foes in a torrent-flood,
From truth's clear fountain flowing.

Our river, once so broad and deep,

Brought ships of burthen hither;
Then honest trade her sails unfurled
Now blown - we know not whither;
But should the Harp-tree branch take root
In the British Parliament,
Dame Fortune soon may smile again
Unto our hearts' content.

Our maids are fair as white rosebuds,
Our wives as daisies chaste, Sir,
Our lads staunch wrestlers, loving well
Of the flowing bowl to taste, Sir;
And then will join us - one and all -
In the toast, while life remains,
'May the Harp-tree long its branched wave
Athwart our native plains!'

And now to mention of two sad events. When my brother was yet a very little fellow, so little as to sit on a highchair, he tilted the chair backwards, and falling clear of it struck the stone hearth. It was hot weather, and the rug had been removed. His hip was found to be bruised, and he was presently seized with convulsions. He was a beautiful child, and great was ~~our parents' distress~~ the consternation which ensued. About the same time a careless nurse upset our sister Frances from what then did duty for a perambulator, and the child's head was dashed against the ground, with a worse than fatal effect, for the result was that the brain stood still in respect of reasoning power, never making ~~any further~~ advance. She was not an imbecile, and her disposition - though subject to the sway of passion - remained ~~as sweet and~~ very affectionate. The nurse was weak enough not to tell; and when finally all came out, the mischief proved irreparable. But to return to my brother. ~~Our father and mother His~~ He was hurried up to Town

~~with him~~ in a post chaise to secure the best advice; and Mr Benjamin Brodie and Sir Astley Cooper did their best or their worst for him, for they caustickied his hip every day for three months, and tied him daily for many hours to a flat board, ~~giving~~ granting no ~~liberty~~ exercise or freedom for six months to the bruised limb, (For a wonder they did not bleed ~~him~~ - then the universal panacea!). When I come to think of it they must have cupp'd him. This primitive treatment brought about a permanent contraction of one leg, so that my brother was rendered lame for life, necessitating the use of a high boot, and very trying this lameness proved. So long as he was a young man, he could never enter a room in which people were assembled without a painful shyness, whilst he was shut out from many sports to which he ~~greatly~~ much inclined. No doubt there were compensations. The affection of all about him was heightened if possible, and he was necessarily thrown back upon books, thought taking for him ~~largely~~ to some extent the place of action. He, however, who was to prove so huge a ~~spiller of ink~~ blotter of paper, could not be persuaded for a time to learn the alphabet. Not until he was full seven years old did he master this difficulty. At last an old Mrs Hunter, wife of Admiral Hunter, took the bright little fellow in hand. Her plan was, if her pupil shewed inattention, to say, 'Very well, then we'll play and do no more work today.' This put him on his ~~metal~~ mettle, and he learnt to read in a canter.

# Chapter II
# Childhood at Tregony in Continuation
# 1827 – 1830

As soon as my brother could read he made a collection of playbills, and his delight was to construct an imaginary play out of such bills as more especially took his fancy. Would he were here to be appealed to as to his recollection of these most enchanting of playthings! It must have been before he endeavoured to clothe these dry bones with flesh that he wrote his first childish play of which one brief scene remains impressed upon my memory.

*Scene a wood. It is night. The moon is hidden.*
*Enter a traveller and speaks: The night is very dark.*
*Enter a robber and speaks: Your money or your life.*
*Traveller throws down a penny, and exit.*

Many a childish effort followed, but nothing that I can chronicle.

My brother's love of theology kept pace with his love for the drama. His father, when about to enter the dining-room one day, heard his eldest son's voice uplifted in admonition. Archer was hard at it, beseeching his audience to amend their ways, and uncompromisingly stern as to the place they would go to if they didn't. On entering, his father found the child standing on the dining-room table and dissolved in tears. ~~His~~ The audience consisted of the dining-room chairs!

It was evident to his elders that the child was imaginative. And here again I lack some record of his own sensations. I am sure, in spite of lameness, that God's world opened on him with much of glee, though not without a minor

chord of sadness. His interest in politics from an early age was deep; and no less deep was his interest in religion. Here it was that a touch of gloom awaited him. On our Grandfather's death Mr Vaughan became Rector of Tregony, and he in his turn was speedily succeeded by Mr Lugger whom I knew well. Mr Lugger had first been a Solicitor, and report said that he had been converted by a vivid dream of hell. Be this as it may, his preaching was much about hell. He preached from notes, ably, at great length, and the parish church was filled with admiring congregations. How reassuring it was to be welcomed home after those sermons by our great white poodle, Gendarme, with much wagging of tail - he watching at a bow window and bouncing out at our approach.

One day Mr Lugger asked me, then a very little fellow, how I liked his sermons. I was polite, and told him they were very nice, but rather long. He smiled and bade me hold up my finger next time when considered he had preached long enough, and I promised to do so. I was as good as my word. No sooner had he given out his text on the very next Sunday, and spoken half a dozen opening sentences, than I jumped up on the seat of our family pew, and shook my finger vigorously. He saw me and nearly broke down. But my readers may say 'We don't want your biography, but that of your brother.' They are quite right, only I must tell this story in my own way. The fact is we are mixed up, and with his Cornish cream a little of my skim milk must be endured.

Now let me revert to the touch of gloom which befell us in connection with religion. Mr Lugger's sermons were no doubt a trial to thoughtful children, and so was the popular creed which made them possible. Often we got away from this, and were as happy as children ought to be, but at other times we were oppressed in spirit. Hell did certainly shut out some of the blue sky overhead, though not all. The religion of fear too surely ripp'd our trust in our Heavenly Father, though it might not remove it, altogether. My

brother's instincts were devout and could not be repressed. Love he would even this terrible God. Sunday was a severe day, mindless and dull, and to be dreaded accordingly. Will it seem trifling to particularise here? The entire catechism had to be said without more than three mistakes – ~~or~~ the penalty for failure being no pudding or tart: The Collect had to be learnt without a fault, but this was comparatively a small matter. I don't suppose these things affected my brother who had a soul above pudding, and who besides had no difficulty in learning these or yet harder tasks, but upon me they brought ~~present~~ poignant misery. My frame of mind under these circumstances was not a Christian one; and when, by way of punishment, a chapter in the Bible has been set me to learn, I am truly sorry and ashamed ~~to say~~ confess that I have kicked the Bible round the room. Even our mother's affectionate disposition was tempered - more especially on Sunday - by the severity of the period, which insisted on discipline for discipline's sake, so that it was quite worthwhile to be a little ill in order to experience the full warmth of her affection. No day made any difference to our father's indulgent spirit, which was a comfort. My impression is that, with different Sundays, ours would have been a thoroughly Christian childhood: I mean if Sunday, being blest with cheerful occupations had been made the gladdest day of the week to us instead of the saddest. Watt's Hymns, redolent of brimstone and sulphur, - O how different from Mrs Alexander's - had to be learnt on that day; and then the dreary books, approved by Mr Lugger that were given to us to read: Happy children nowadays who may read on Sunday, with the approval of elders, the high-minded, pathetic, cheerful and delightful tales of those noble English women, Miss Young, Mrs Gatty, her daughter Mrs Ewing, and Mrs Molesworth, together with a thousand soul-elevating and enchanting books besides! And if I were to mention in this connection a fifth noble and Christian lady writer of our Time, it should be Hesba Stretton. Can I ever forget her *Pilgrim Street*?

But, thank heaven, our week-day literature was not of Mr Lugger's selection. We were not saturated with puritan pabulum then. We were spared that last indignity. When lessons were done with, and out of door play was over, we read fairy tales, and tales of chivalry, and the Arabian Nights, and Miss Edgeworth's agreeable *Early Lessons* and masterly *Moral and Popular Tales*. From these and the like we drew in such intellectual life as we were then capable of assimilating. My brother led me on, being naturally ever far ahead of me. I can recall a very early period of life when our week-day books, mine at least, consisted of a few, a very few, fairy tales, got up much as Strohwelpeter is got up, now, with illustrations of which the prevailing tints were ~~yellow~~ blue and ~~blue~~ yellow. Were we to be pitied in comparison with the children of today who possess armfuls of books lovely, or at all events gorgeous, in respect of print end binding and pictures? I am not sure, and the grapes are sour. Certainly those old fairy tales, only given out from the cupboard as an occasional treat, were bewildering. Their very rarity made them the more precious. No tale charmed us much more at that date than *Downy, or The Fieldmouse*.

Cornwall is a superstitious County, and ours was a superstitious family. Our mother, having been born on a Sunday, was supposed to possess a special faculty for seeing ghosts. Even our father lived and died under the conviction that he had seen his father's spirit. This is how it happened. Our grandfather, the old Rector of Tregony, when on his deathbed, was besought by ~~our father~~ his son who loved him dearly to appear to him after death, if that might lawfully be, and give him assurance of his happiness. Not a week after the burial, ~~our father~~ that son, being awake in the night, saw his father in the room with his usual very sweet smile, and, awaking our mother, said, 'Catherine, do you see anything?' She said, 'Yes, I see your father.' ~~Our father~~ It was discovered presently that the appearance was apparently the result of shadow and moonlight, for it was affected by the gentlest swaying of a curtain. The curtain was thereupon left untouched, and our father

watched the appearance with delight until daybreak.

If the master and mistress were superstitious, much more so were the servants. ~~Our~~ The nurses sought to frighten us with bogy and me at least they frightened considerably. Once, being left alone ~~in the house~~ with the servants, I saw bogy, i.e. a figure in a white sheet. Happily I was out of doors close to the house, and the sun was shining, - reassuring circumstances. One Nurse was with me, the other had disappeared. There was bogy! Then for once I was valiant. Picking up a pebble, and carefully keeping Nurse between me and danger, I shied the pebble at the apparition, which entered an outhouse and was lost to view. My brother, in my place, would have followed up that bogy - though not without awe. This kind of thing made me timid, whilst it only added to ~~my brother's~~ his character an element of romance.

Our father had one sister who died before we were born. There has been for many a generation one clever Miss Gurney, and our father's sister it was who represented the female talent of the family in her lifetime. She was married, when very young, to Capt. Wooldridge R.N., and, before dying, she bore him three sons and one daughter. William, the eldest, my godfather, is still living, patriarchal and delightful, himself a Captain in the Royal Navy; Warwick, whose adventures would fill a book, an old Colonel, is also still living, but in India where he turned his attention to coffee planting; Frank was shot down when the first to board an enemy's ship, whilst serving under Admiral Napier; and Emily who inherited much of her mother's talent, became the wife of Genl. Burnett. She is no more, but her husband lives. (He has passed away since this was written).

These four young people helped greatly to brighten Trewinion House. William lived with his young wife scarce a stone's throw away. And the other three, when so disposed, made their homes more or less with us. They

were little if at all younger than our mother, whom they called Aunt, and for whom they all had a most true affection.

Our mother was a great gardener; and with so many willing helpers at hand - over and above professional aid - she conceived and executed the idea of turning a picturesque field - with a handy cottage - some half mile from the house, into a pleasure ground. A prettier garden than Furda, that was the name of it, with its sloping lawn and running brook, has seldom been seen, and to children and elders alike it was a source of endless pleasure. There on many a summer evening - the kettle being boiled at the cottage - we had tea, and Cornish heavy cake, and oceans of cream and fruit. Ghosts frequented this garden, but, thank goodness, only in our absence, the people at the cottage being responsible for strange sights, wheel-barrows wheeling of their own sweet will, &c.

But what my brother and I enjoyed above all things were picnics ~~matters of frequent occasions~~ to the glorious Cornish coast, to Port Low and Carhayes, only a very few miles distant. Some rode, and some drove, and a light waggon conveyed the children with the good things. The horses were put up at the nearest farmhouse, or else tethered. Are there such rocks again in the world, such pools left by the receding tide, such wonders of the deep, such delights - inclusive of Cornish pies and pasties? On one of these occasions our mother was lost to view round a promontory, and little Archer's affectionate agony, I have been told, at the thought of her possible loss - for the tide was dangerous - was heart-rending; and on seeing her safe he all but fainted for joy. I quote here some lines from *Spring*, my brother's earliest volume of poems, expressive of affectionate anxiety, which may well have arisen - though there is no direct allusion - from this and other similar apprehensions.

O, fond ~~of~~ were young affection's fears

For those it prized its all!
And almost yet some pleasant tears
That memory might recall.

Oft, haply, from her side afar,
This thought our fancy cross'd
'What if, beneath some evil star,
My mother now were lost!'

And that vague dread, all cause without,
Hath open kept our eyes,
While spells of anxious fever-doubt
Bade ghosts of terror rise.

Or, when some childish sin had earn'd
A frown, no kind good-night,
How has the childish spirit yearn'd
To be forgiven quite.

Till at the last, grief unrepress'd
Has forced to seek that door,
And urge in sobs that shook the breast
A kiss but this once more.

O, that such fears, however fond,
Such sorrows might endure,
To carry - childhood's years beyond -
The child's affections pure!

Quoting poetry inclines me to quote more. I mentioned that our cousin, Frank Wooldridge, met with his death in the act of boarding an enemy's

ship. Our father felt his nephew's loss deeply and wrote the following lines.

*Monody*

On the death of the late Flag Lieut. of Vice-Adml. Napier,
*Lieutenant Francis Wooldridge.*

Of Her M.F. Majesty's Ship Rainha da Portugal, who was killed on the quarter-deck of the enemy's ship, Nao Rainha, on the 6th instant, off Cape St Vincent, after having, with his brave companions in arms, gallantly boarded the latter ship, and in the moment of victory.

Dear Frank! of whom I was so proud,
So fond - alas! Thou'st in thy shroud!
Thy star hath set - thy race is run -
My own, my only sister's son.

For sacred freedom, honour, fame,
Thy young heart burned - I fanned the flame,
And sent thee to the war with joy -
My dashing, gallant, sailor-boy!

And thinking soon to follow thee,
Would fain have crossed the deep blue sea,
And led from forth our native West
Hearts of the bravest and the best.

(The writer offered to raise a regiment for the service of Her Most Faithful Majesty; but circumstances prevented the offer from being accepted.)

Of gentle manners - noble daring -
Patrician lineage - modest bearing -
How can I feel but lone and sad,
To lose for aye my ocean-lad!

Thy valiant chief's well-earned renown
Hath gained for him a laurel crown!
(The ladies of Lagos presented the hero with a crown of laurel on a silver plate).
A cypress wreath the bard befits,
Where like a shipwrecked man he sits

I hoped to press thee once again
To my warm heart - that hope was vain!
The Flag-Lieutenant of the Fleet
Hath pennant changed for winding-sheet.

I thought to feast thee in my hall,
And give for thee the merry ball,
To kindred, tenants, friends - ah me!
It might not, would not, could not be:

For thou ere long with ebbing breath,
Led'st off the mournful dance of death;
Yes, thou thyself wert feast unto
The warm, and bad'st the world adieu.

Thy theories, Philosophy!
In practice seem but mockery!
The ingenuous young - the gay - the brave -
Hath poured his lifeblood o'er the wave,

For solace I apply to art,
Yet nature still will play her part.
I drain the wine-cap woo the lyre;
But who may quench the undying fire?

Would I had fought by thy dear side!
Fallen in thine arms, blessed thee, and died!
So had I stopped the shaft that sped,
And laid thee in thy narrow bed.

But thou art gone - thy smile no more
Will greet, will cheer me, as of yore;
And I, the ever luckless one,
Sent thee to death, my sister's son!

July 1833 R.G.

There is little more that I need say of our childhood, though I could lightly babble on. Our Nurses taught us to speak broad Cornish. Thus, my cousin William's little dog Fideler was named by me 'Fiddle my sen'; and to the last year of his life, my brother, when addressing working men, and using great plainness of speech, would relapse into something of a Cornish accent. Archer, as a child, was full of life and fire and a most entertaining companion, making the liveliest sallies, I don't mean to imply that he was perfect, for I think that his lameness made him at times fretful and impatient. After the accident his frame and limbs became comparatively puny; but I believe he would have faced a lion. He ever had the valour of a true knight; and with him physical pluck was surpassed by moral courage. This last was his special mark through life. We were early taught that the Gurneys were an honourable race who had come over with the Norman

Conqueror; and I believe we thought ourselves as good as most people, and perhaps a little better - see the book about the De Gournay family by Mr Daniel Gurney of Norfolk, and known in that County as '*The Apocryphal Book of Daniel*' : Our father was offered knighthood in connection with the disfranchisement of the borough in which he had large an interest, but to our satisfaction he refused it.

Quick let me jot down two or three more memories. The man who could eat all before him, and look for more, is he worth mentioning? Our father had a whole leg of mutton placed before this man, (where can our grandmother have been?) and when he had finished it he said,'I be satisfied, but I bean't full.' A more graceful act of hospitality was our annual twelfth-night children's party, with duly chosen king and queen, when Archer formed the centre of the fun. I too, unintentionally, caused some fun, when, being sent behind a screen with a nice little girl to pay forfeit, and being bidden to spell the word opportunity, I was heard spelling it conscientiously to the very close. I quote here briefly from my brother's *School-boy Memories* in '*Spring*.'

> And I remember, too - do you, young ladies?
> Those parties, where such forfeits dear were sold;
> And, lingering behind doors, - my Muse afraid is
> To call up blushes; so that tale's not told!
> And thee, the first fair mistress of my fancy,
> I ten, thou twelve, - thy bright locks floating down,
> Blue eyes, sweet voice, and name - or Rose or Nancy-
> What matters that? I'll jot thy portrait down.
> In thy white garment, with the blue sash flying!

I must mention a ~~fairy-like~~ shallow well, a short way from Trewinion House, on the way to Furda, from which the villagers fetched water when

they wanted the very best. For that well, we, Archer and I, have many a time since then felt a longing like to that of David for the well which is by the gate in Bethlehem. It was arched over for shelter, the masonry being covered with lovely ferns which nobody disturbed. ~~Three~~ Several steps led down to it.

~~One~~ Another bunch of memories I ought to recall characteristics of the time. Sheep-stealing was then punished with death. A young man whom our father had known from a child stole a sheep, - ~~ours too I think~~ possibly ours - and the constables were after him. Our father hid him in some outhouse, and chartered a fishing boat which carried him in safety to - I know not where. No wonder if honest subjects circumvented our draconian lasso -, earthly punishments then keeping pace, though at a respectful distance, with infernal terrors. Those were the days of smuggling; and on various occasions our father's horses were borrowed at night without leave, and brought back at dawn of day smoking hot, a ~~small~~ propitiatory keg of brandy being possibly left in ~~complimentary payment~~ the stable. The wreckers also were busy in those days, and I know not what laces and silks and soaps and perfumes, the proceeds of wrecks, were disposed of to the ladies of our family. Is it worthwhile recording how often we have seen our Nurses bruise their knuckles when striking sparks from a flint, and igniting amadon or tinder, when as yet matches were not?

One word of mention I must give to the dear little river at the lower end of Tregony, once so clear, but now disfigured with the admixture of white clay. ~~Thus does~~ Archer alludes to it ~~in Spring~~ in some lines ~~addressed 'To Cornwall~~' which I will quote,

*To Cornwall*

Though far from the land of my fathers I'm straying,

Yet think not my heart has not cherish'd its scenes;
It dwells on each meadow where artlessly playing
The butterfly roams, and the humming bee gleans.
O fair is the land, and its blossoms are sweet,
And blooming its fields with the high-sweeping wheat;
Yet beauties like these ne'er such glow could impart; -
'Tis the Home of my Fathers, and Friend of my Heart.

In the river that flows through you, shadowy vale
There is little perchance to regard or admire,
Yet I think of its waters so shallow and pale
With a mixture of friendship and childish desire.
Lo the rocks by the ocean are gloomy and grand,
And proudly yon waves in the distance expand;
Yet thoughts such as these might like visions depart
If in Cornwall I hail'd not the Friend of my Heart.

Yes, my Country, thy mem'ry I ever will prize,
Where'er my light back o'er life's ocean may steer;
And when mountains and lake on my prospect arise,
I'll think of a landscape, less fair, but more dear.
There are Treasures which bask in each cavernous dell,
Which gleam in the palace, and shine on the mart
But it is not for these that I love thee so well;
Thou'rt the Home of my Fathers, and Friend of my Heart.

From *Spring*

Would that Cornishmen might treasure the fame of one, who, by birth and affection, though not by length of residence, was emphatically a Cornishman!

And shall I have no word for thee, my dearest Dick, our youngest brother, whose short life - he died at 18 - remained bright and clear to the very end! And yet the tales I have to tell in connection with those childish days will not redound exactly to thy credit; for thou wert a sad pickle: A cockerel of rare breeding was missing, and thou wert suspected, at the age of four, of having made away with it; and truly thou had'st buried it, for warmth, in the earth, all but the neck and beak, with which part of its frame it feebly chanticleered and so was rescued, whilst thou wert whipped. A thoughtless deed, not a cruel one, and redeemed by a thousand generous actions. One more memory of Dick, and I have done. A superannuated gardener of ours, old Jack Strongman, a great favourite, whose cottage was close at hand, lay on his death-bed; and Dick, who was the old man's constant and affectionate visitor, ran into the cottage one day saying, 'Jack, Jack, you're going to die.' - 'What be ee talkin of, Master Dick?' - 'Well, Jack, Dr Jewel says you're going on a long journey; and what else can that mean?' The old gardener questioned no more, but turned his face to the wall, and his spirit soon took the direction of his own climbing roses.

How easily written is all this, but how hard may it prove perhaps to read! In accordance with Lord Byron's dictum, 'Your d____d fast writing makes d____d slow reading.' It is not here as in fiction, where a startling narrative can be drawn at will from the imagination. Everything is here set down truly, and that is indeed its only merit. But because the things told are bound-up with my heart-strings, must they possess interest for others? At all events I have sketched, for better for worse, the surroundings of my poet-brother's childhood.

# Chapter III
# Helstone School
# 1832-1833

To the best of my belief my brother Archer preceded me to Helstone School by a twelvemonth or more. When we were there, and I doubt not a long time after we left, it was considered the best school in Cornwall. Helstone is situated near, not on, the sea, halfway between Falmouth and the Lizard. Derwent Coleridge, born 1800, son of Samuel Taylor Coleridge the poet, was Headmaster; and Mr C.A. Johns, well known later for his books on birds and flowers, was the second Master. The school is in the centre of the little town, but we were quickly in the country which was all around. This prettiness rose to beauty in one direction, that of Loo pool, a bright little lake full of trout, only divided from the sea by a splendid bar of sand. Woods ran down to the sea by the lake's side; and a brook, in which we caught minnows, ran into and no doubt also out of the lake. We had a play-ground at the school; but, besides this, by the courtesy of the Mayor and Corporation, the bowling-green at the lower end of the town formed our larger playground, whilst we possessed a cricket-field some quarter or half a mile away.

If I am to begin at the beginning I must recall my arrival at school. I was a very little fellow; and it was no slight consolation to me that my brother - himself not very big - was there to protect me. If I was seven he would be eleven years and nine months old. His protection was unfailing; but it could not altogether stave off a rough reception from my schoolfellows. All that Archer could do was to bid me play the man, when, barely an hour after our arrival, I was called on to fight with another very little boy -, the older boys forming a ring around us. I think my antagonist was a 'Treweek.' We were both of us just out of the nursery, and as little inclined to hurt one another as

might be, but there was no help for it. However, when a few rather innocent blows had passed between us, Archer intervened, declaring that honour was satisfied, and the other fellows allowed us to part.

I was for a long time unhappy in my work, because I found a custom prevailing which placed the old Eton Latin Grammar - all in Latin in the hands of the very youngest boys, without one word of printed English. To this hour I resent having been made to stand on a high stool with a dunce's cap on my head, for not comprehending by intuition an unknown tongue - though I admit that I was slow to learn.

I don't think Gurney major suffered as Gurney minor did in learning Latin on this plan, but then he was exceptionally quick. Surely my experience must have been a common one? The ordinary punishment for trifling offences was caning on the paIm of the hand. It stung, but as a rule was not very bad. A caning on a different part of the frame - or was it a birching? - was resorted to in more serious cases; to Mr Coleridge's honour be it recorded that in days when boys were cruelly thrashed, our punishments were mild.

Besides the help Gurney major derived from his marked abilities, I am certain that he was for a short period at a preparatory school, where he mastered the rudiments of Latin on a more rational system. I recollect his grateful remembrance, which never quite died out, of Mrs Blimber (I wish I could remember her real name) the Headmaster's wife. The school in question had glasshouses well supplied with vines; and it was a pleasant custom to let the boys scramble for bunches of grapes; but, on account of my brother's lameness, kind Mrs Blimber always took care that he would have a good supply before the scramble began.

To return to Helstone. Mr Johns imparted more or less to the entire school

his passion for natural history; and, among the rest, the two Gurneys set up a collection of butterflies. Very fine the butterflies are or were in Cornwall, and we used to catch some beauties. Brilliant also were the dragonflies. And then the lanes and fields in which we pursued them, net in hand, with peeps of the distant sea, were enchanting. Hampers from home were very popular, and when our first hamper was on its way I gave the reins to imagination. The entire school was to revel in a feast: When the hamper - a good one - arrived, my disappointment at the first was keen; but the fellows took their share in all jollity. They had discounted my childish enthusiasm.

Dear plum-cake,
To schoolboy sent: O what a glory treasures
Our fancy in that vision: For its sake
Who'd not be child again?

*Schoolboy Memories*

Let me say at once that Mr Coleridge placed great confidence in Gurney major. No boy in some respects stood higher in the school. Owing to the fact that his strength of body did not correspond with his powers of mind, it cost him an effort to hold his own against certain sons of Anak, but his pluck was indomitable. His age did not warrant him in being a leading boy, neither did he set up for one. Though shut out from such intimacies as fellowship in sports entails, he was popular in his way. Dearly did he love all games, but could not do much at them. It was after we had retired to our dormitory that his light shone most brightly. He was 'raconteur par excellence'; and night after night he would go on spinning a yarn of the most thrilling description until the cessation of all comment, together with a chorus of gentle slumberous breathings, warned him that his audience was asleep.

That tale romantic, eve on eve returning,

I told one (that I'll swear) through half a year,
In volumes three, with chapters never ending,
Love, battle, shipwreck, feats by flood and fell, -
Inventing as I told, while, breath-suspending
My hearers lay. Then the sad morning-bell
That toll'd to school; school's self; our learned master,
A poet's son, and eke a poet he;
Our mistress fair; each freak and each disaster
Back, back they rush, to burden memory.

*School-boy Memories*, From *Spring*.

Another boy at the school - to become more famous than my brother in his life-time - was Charles Kingsley. Oddly enough, and to my regret, I cannot recall him personally. We slept in different dormitories. Kingsley and Gurney major must, I suppose, have been rivals where the powers of imagination were concerned; and what there was of literary feeling in the school doubtless gathered round these two. I am not aware that my brother and Charles Kingsley ever met in later life, though once in a way they corresponded. More names of Helstone boys that I remember are Borlase, Wright, Robinson, Millett, Treweek, Foster, Moyle, Tonkins, Edmonds, Grylls major and minor, Bolitho, Hockin, and my grave cousin William Gurney. I know not who the *Da*vid can have been to whom allusion is made in the following lines from *School-boy Memories* - to me a golden mine:

Yet one short verse to mourn thy quick departing,
Dear David, shy and good: - who diedst, I know,
In thy fresh youth! - My giddy memory, starting,
Flies to the hour when I appear'd thy foe.

Ill tongues had fired us to dissension; thus

Did challenge pass, was battle fix'd: we met,
We fought: yet 'midst our ardour emulous
Our old affection trembled inly yet.
And so (strange freak of boyhood), so agreed we
To fight no longer others' eyes before;
That pained too much; straight down the lane proceed we,
In seeming friendship, - turn the corner, - 'O'er

Is mild respective lenity, and fury
The fire-eyed fury is our conduct!' Still
For conquest goal we thirst. Say, olden Drury,
E'en on the stage could glow heroic thrill
More pure than this? Then blow on blow fast rain'd we,
Till at the last - but hush! suffice't to say
A truer friend than aye in that hour gain'd we:
We both! Whoe'er prevailed, love won the day.

We sincerely respected Mr Coleridge, but I think it is not disloyal to question if he understood boy-nature. Probably he was better adapted to deal with young men at St. Mark's College, Chelsea, where his life's main work was done. There indeed he seems to have been loved and honoured from beginning to end.

One junior boy there was at Helstone school who committed an act of worse than folly. Having got into debt he pawned a silver fork belonging to the school, intending to redeem it. The pawn-broker very properly came straight off to Mr Coleridge. Now what was to be done? That which Mr Coleridge did was to tax the culprit with theft in the presence of his schoolfellows and then expel him. There was - so far as I can recall the facts - no preceding letter home, no suggestion that the boy should be quietly withdrawn but only this thunderbolt. It may have been right, but I think it

was harsh, and I have always understood that the boy died shortly afterwards of a broken heart. Allowance, doubtless, should be made for the sterner, fiercer Christianity of the day: of course, the allusion is to rampant Calvinism.

This story may pave the way for another in which my brother was concerned. Small sums of money and various trifles had been lost or stolen at the school, and Mr Coleridge vowed that the next time anything disappeared he would have the servants' boxes searched. Then it was that Gurney major missed a half-sovereign, or half-guinea, if such a coin existed, and very unwillingly mentioned his loss. Mr Coleridge bade him search his pockets well, and make sure. The boy kept to his tale, and Mr Coleridge spoke seriously to the assembled servants, without however proceeding to the extreme measure he had threatened. That same afternoon Gurney major, fumbling in his waistcoat pocket for the fiftieth time, felt something hard inside the lining. It was the missing coin. His first impulse, on which he at once acted, was to pitch it behind his box by his bedside, where the chances were it would have been found next morning, or at least on scrubbing day. But as a matter of fact it was found within an hour. Amidst the general satisfaction which ensued, Archer spent a miserable afternoon; and in the evening, after school-prayers, he lingered, and with many tears made a clean breast. Now no doubt he had failed in moral courage for a moment, and it was most provoking for the Headmaster to have harangued the servants on mistaken grounds; but I can't help thinking that blame and encouragement should have been meted out to the penitent in something like equal proportions. What Mr Coleridge said in his haste was that he never could have believed that Gurney major would be guilty of such cowardice, that he never should quite esteem him again, and that he felt it to be his duty to bring his conduct, in concealing the money, before the assembled school; but on reflection, when the morrow came, he forbore from doing this. My brother lived and died under the impression - knowing

how painfully sensitive he had been - that an exposure such as was contemplated would have caused him to commit suicide. And I repeat, I question if our Head-master - though in many respects a fine fellow - understood boy-nature.

Mrs Coleridge, whose maiden name was Mary S. Pridham, was beloved by the whole school. She was very bright and clever and pretty as well as kind, and she was good enough to teach us small boys geography, and also the catechism on Sundays. Her Sunday teaching involved no misery. Helstone parish church was large, not beautiful; only the view from the churchyard was that - over the Loo pool towards the sea. We boys sat in the gallery and were not worried by a too strict supervision. I am scarcely a judge as to what the services were like, but, as I think, they were what would be now called a little extra protestant. By way of ritual we admired the beadle. Except that we sucked toffee or its equivalent, I imagine we behaved well in church. Sunday, with its 'idle hands' was a trying day. It was the day for teasing and quarrels, for ill-temper and bullying. To write a letter home on that day, and so invoke the memory of that which was holiest and most Christian in our lives would have been then accounted wicked. We were well fed, Mr Coleridge being liberal in all his ways, and fastidious on this point. One only thing was nasty, and that was our Sunday cake, lumpy with suet, supposed to be an improvement on bread and butter. A round robin was signed by way of protest, and in our presence Mr Coleridge tasted the cake, gravely pronouncing it to be excellent. We saw him wince however as he swallowed it; and the cake troubled us no more.

My brother and I had introduction to several families in the town, and these kindly invited us from time to time to their houses. It was then that I made the acquaintance of a very young lady, a Miss Trevenen, whom I mustered courage to ask to be my partner in the Flora dance on Flora Day. Should my partner of days read this will she accept my friendly and respectful

greeting? I have recovered a childish letter written by my brother, which fitly comes in here.

Helstone April 30th 1832

*To Miss Pigou*

My dear Aunt

You will make me write twice following, so though it is a hard thing, yet I do so want to hear how you all are that I must do it. Now I will try to get as much together as I can, so here goes, Tomorrow being May Day, is a Holiday and the boys are going to rise early to go out maying, but I am afraid we shall be obliged to gather the may in buds. We shall also have bread and cream for tea which is a great treat I can assure you. Tomorrow week is Flora Day, but though it is very gay I do not like it much, for I cannot suppress my envy at the sight of my other schoolfellows so happy; but I should think that I might learn to dance. Papa told me that I was to in a little while.

Augustus has engaged himself to Miss Trevenen. I was at Mr Gryll's all last Monday, Mr Grylls wishing to see Papa's manuscript of Bolyzarious (sic!). He thought it was very pretty, as did Mr Coleridge. He said to me when he was giving it back to me, after he had read it, I hope you will be as clever a man and as good a scholar as your father. It begins

Chant to the winds a lay of chivalry

Could you send me a cake? I have not had one for a long time. Excuse bad writing for I never was a very good dapster. How does Grandmama

Thompson like ‘The Thistles of Scotland’? I am going to learn the guitar very soon. In the Holidays it will be a pleasing accompliment (sic!) to Grandmama and the pianoforte.

I remain your affectionate Nephew

Archer Thompson Gurney

P.S. Mrs Coleridge has gone to Plymouth for the day. We have a mania here for painting, like the cockney for Miss Fanny Kemble.

If *Belizarius* - see above letter - was ever printed, I can find no copy. Of another work of my father’s, *Fables on Men and Manners*, only the *Dedication* to his father, the Rev. Richard Gurney, M.A., remains in manuscript. This dedication consists of 110 lines and is too long for quotation. At the end of it my brother has written ‘Most charming lines A.G.’ It has for heading this sweetest line of Horace:-

‘O et praesidium, et dulce decus meum.’

Let me supply a sample, taken at almost haphazard, though it be a poor substitute for the whole.

How glowed my joyous soul, respected sire!
When midst the circle of thy evening fire,
Anxious I climb’d thy knee to hear thee tell
The various turns of fortune that befel
Crusoe, or him of almost equal fame,
A wonderous man! and Philip Quarl his name!
With thou in fancy’s maze I ploughed the main,
Shared all his pleasure and partook his pain;

Now on the pebbly beach the negroes fought,
Now on the mountain top the wild goat sought,
With this on contemplation's wing aspired,
And nature in her simplest garb admired;
Caressed the favorite Lama, with delight,
Or pierced the sea-bird in its rapid flight.
And when old Morpheus' dull but potent sway
Forbade beside the hearth my longer stay,
Though by the day's fatigue and sleep opprest,
With half reluctant steps I sought my rest;
Yet ere I went thy promise would obtain
Next night to tell some pleasing tale again.

The dancing on Flora Day began in our playground. A central maypole was there erected, for the adornment of which with May blossom the hedges far and near had been put under requisition. Our fellows would scour the country from dawn of day to accomplish this; and wild tales were told of indignant farmers defending their property pitchfork in hand, but my belief is that the farmers were pleased to see us come. Thrice we circled hand in hand round the Maypole, which Mrs Coleridge had covered with wreaths - with the help of the maids - and then, not before 11 o'clock, we were off and away. A military band marched before us through the streets of Helstone playing the Flora dance. Ladies and gentlemen led the way. We schoolboys followed after with our partners, dancing a kind of figure. The soldiers and the tradesmen had done the same thing with their sweethearts at an earlier hour of the day. The weather, as I remember it, was perfect. We were invited to pass through some of the principal private houses and gardens - this being supposed to bring luck - always keeping in the rear of the band. At length my little partner and I were fairly tired out and left behind; and she took me home, nothing loth, to play with her before an early dinner. The hospitable custom was that we boys all dined at our

partner's house. One boy, and one boy only, had not joined in the dance because he was lame, and consequently had to fare as he best might at the school. This, need I say, was Gurney major. The thought of him in solitude, crossing me in the midst of high enjoyment, was too much for me, and as I sat down to a very nice dinner I fairly lifted my voice and wept. The result was that Mr Trevenen good-naturedly packed me off to fetch Gurney major. He was not at the school; but, knowing his haunts, I ran him down quickly at the bookseller's, where I found him perched on a high stool, in a state of perfect bliss, inter-changing remarks with his friend the bookseller, and reading the last No. of a new issue of *The Devil on Two Sticks*. After that our dinner was a merry one. Reference to this, and other trifling Helstone incidents, is made in Archer Gurney's early Volume, *Spring*.

See
*L'Envoy to School-boy Memories*

To thee, my Brother: who has shared with me
These memories sweet, - I dedicate the song.
It tells not of thy fellowship, nor thee;
And yet believe not I would do thee wrong:
I, too, remember those long days of roaming
Beside the reeds, where o'er the current flew
Bright dragon-flies, superb as Autumn's gloaming,
That evermore our rapturous glances drew;

Where launch'd we paper vessels on the waters,
Which races ran, exciting, soul-inspiring:
Your dancing, too, midst Cornwall's lively daughters,
On Flora Day, through Helstone's streets, untiring; -
And our glad sympathies when came some letter
From mother dear or sire beloved to cheer us,
Or haply something that was almost better,

The rich plum-cake, that brought home's self quite near us,

Just at the door: - your tears when I at home
Sat moping, and you dined in circle pleasant! -
Well, well, no more - such words are idle foam,
And yet they're rainbow-hued to me at present!
My Christmas greeting should be holier, graver,
From Priest to Deacon: - but the blithe bells ring
Old Christmas carols, - 'On boys, never waver!'
And so I end my boyish Song of Spring.

*Mem. This Envoy is dated 1850*

I like those lines and many a line besides which I shall yet have to quote from the self-same autobiographical poem, *School-boy Memories*. It is clear that at times Archer felt his lameness deeply, cutting him off daily as it did from some joy or other. He writes in his letter 'I cannot suppress my envy at the sight of my other schoolfellows so happy.' This, need I say, was but a passing feeling; and yet, with many a generous exception, the success of other men, as contrasted with his own failures, was to be a trial to him through life.

# Chapter IV
# Helstone School in Continuation
# 1832-1833

And have I more to tell about Helstone School? Yes, indeed. I may not omit all mention of a temporary state of warfare between our fellows and the town-boys. They challenged us - for no particular reason - to fight them on the bowling-green. We accepted. Then came rumours, soon amounting to certainties, that the town-boys would bring cudgels with them. So we got a carpenter to turn us out a lot of constables' staves. Very proud I was of mine as I took my place, as near as I could to my brother, in battle array. He was as bold as a lion, and in tearing spirits I carried off my fears to all appearance, and even gained a little kudos by a swashing outside. I am sorry to say some of the town-boys had poured molten lead into the hollowed end of their sticks. As we were coming to blows the masters and a constable or two appeared upon the scene. The town-boys fled; so should we have fled in their place, but we were known, and to run away was useless. I think some of the older boys among us had impositions. After that we and the town-boys were on better terms. They knew it wasn't our fault that the battle was stayed, and we knew it wasn't theirs. Did the carpenter tell?

May I find room for the mention of some discreditable conduct of my own? My pocket money, if I remember right, was 3d a week. No doubt Archer had double. I was a customer to several old women who kept fruit-stalls, and to one very nice old lady near the bowling-green, who sold delicious ginger-bread nuts. They were all very kind in giving one credit, which I accepted gaily. But a day of reckoning was to come. Somehow Archer learnt that I was in debt - saw me probably with apples when to his knowledge, I had no pence -; and he and my grave and solemn cousin

William Gurney, not a bad fellow, youngest son of my uncle Warwick - of whom more anon - marched me round the town making enquiry as to my debts. Alas, I owed a shilling or two here, and a shilling or two there -, I daresay eight or nine shillings altogether; and how were my debts to be paid, late on in the term as it was, when nobody had any money left? Archer was serious, but dear old William was downright judicial: he was kind enough ever to have a liking for me, and to see after my ~~morals~~ 'mores.' They did not take the matter lightly, but set my sins roundly before me, - and they were right. Seeing what had befallen that other Helstone boy who got into debt, I thank them to this hour. They were helpful too, and resolved that our three allowances should be clubbed together until the last farthing was paid when, to my passing anxiety but ~~solid satisfaction~~ huge consolation, our dearest mother came to see us. She had been on a visit in the neighbourhood. Her very first act was to pay off my debt, which had been confided to her, without so much as giving me a scolding; no doubt she considered that I had had my lesson. How bewilderingly delightful we thought her visit. She was still very young, and, as we held, very nice-looking. That an aroma of home and affection she brought with her! Her very dress seemed perfection. But presently the parting - what agony it involved - for one or two hours! As rapturous joy, and more lasting, was our when we went home for the holidays. Here let my brother's verses speak for me.

Tell me, of the joys
Life doth hold in store,
What exceeds the boy's
Near his father's door?
When the tapers bright
From the well-known hall
Glitter through the night
Beaming home to call.

Down the dear-loved vale
See the chariot darts:
Hail ye meadows, hail
All ye kindly hearts!
Not a cot, a tree,
Memory doth not trace;
Boyhood's eager glee
Would the world embrace.

See, they near the gate:
Those who prize him best
There to meet him wait -
Who shall paint the rest?
For such smiles and tears -
Bliss by tears will speak -
Through all coming years
Vainly shall he seek.

O, those kisses fond,
Questions fast and free,
Joys all words beyond, -
Painful ecstacy!
Tell me, ye who live
Life's long stages through,
Hath she much to give
More endear'd to you?

From *Spring*

I have alluded to Archer's early political ardour. Travelling home from

Helstone on one occasion, before my time, by stagecoach, he had for companions a country gentleman. This gentleman and my brother - then ~~probably~~ between ten and eleven - engaged in a political discussion; and the elder ~~of the two~~ amused himself by opposing the ~~side which the younger one earnestly defended~~ younger. The coach stopped for fifteen or twenty minutes at some place where an election was going forward; and, ascending the hustings, my brother's fellow-traveller delivered a most taking speech - and on the right side too! After this the pair went on together in great amity, and at parting Archer received a guinea tip, and a card on which was a distinguished Cornish name, but by me unremembered.

I have not yet mentioned an agreeable pastime which our fellows indulged in, as often as they could. When some of us that were chums had saved up a little capital, we made expeditions to this or that distant farmhouse, where we feasted on junket. I fear it may sound greedy to add (but let outsiders be moved to envy!) that a thick, deep, rich layer of Cornish cream - we didn't call it Devonshire - on bread, with a sprinkling of treacle, known as thunder and lightning made our joy complete. As three or four of us were starting one day, - our thoughts intent on junket - I flung my sixpence for joy into the air in Helstone main street, and it rolled into the gutter wherein ever flowed a bright and clear rapid stream. The sixpence was washed down through a grating, never to be recovered by me; and there was an end to my greedy joy - or would have been, but that Archer magnanimously shared with me his last shilling.

Our holidays were spent once in a way at Tregony (then best), or else at Paul near Penzance with our Uncle Warwick, or possibly with our parents in Town. The Rev. Warwick Olsen Gurney, our father's elder brother, was Perpetual Curate of the parish of Paul, near Penzance, with the fishing villages of Mouse-hole and Newlyn. He was Vicar or Rector of a parish near Bridgnorth besides. Here let the mention, lest I should be thought

irreverent, that nobody called the parish of Paul St. Paul in those days, whatever may be done now. We were very happy at Paul. Our Uncle was a kind but melancholy man, deeply inbred with Calvinism, and one who took his terrible creed to heart. No wonder that he was sad, holding as he did that in spite of Christ's Incarnation and Atonement, this was but a lost world. Of right our Uncle should have been a cheerful man, for his life was blameless. Dear Uncle! how was it that he lived and died a believer? As we sat, my brother and I, in Paul church listening to his eloquence - for that it was though he harped mainly on one string - and receiving his soul-appalling teaching, one of us at least shook in childish shoes. The other would be more likely indignantly to combat the theory laid down. Our grandsire, the Rector of Tregony, had a standing feud with his eldest son in doctrinal matters, and would fulminate against him in the words of S. James 'Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.' Many a time have we seen our Uncle pacing his garden whilst meditating, as we understood, the discourse which he was to preach without book on the following Sunday. The garden abounded in the Spring with sweet peas, and yellow lupins, and sweet-briar and sweet-leaved tree verbenas. Our Uncle was fond of his eldest nephew, taking pleasure in the boy's marked literary taste, and would talk with him about books, though generally given to silence. He had foresworn literature on his own account, apprehending God's curse to be on it. Naturally his taste was that of a gentleman and a scholar. I could tell more about him that I think would be interesting, but I forbear. The view from Paul garden over St. Michael's Bay was never eclipsed for us by any later scenes.

We had our cousins for companions at Paul, all older than us, and all, all passed away. Big Olsen, the eldest son, was hearty and genial; John seemed to us to have low tastes for a De Gournay; and William was ever solemn and friendly. We got on well with our Aunt, whose own house, Trungle, was close at hand. And now for the girls. Nanny was bright and merry, and not a

little pretty. Agnes was very sweet: she died early of consumption. These lines on her death occur in *Spring*.

*Stanzas*

Her smiles were destined to illume
Some star of happier birth;
She was a flower too bright to bloom
On the desert wilds of earth:
For here, where sultry tempests rage,
And all that's pure assail,
Even she their wrath could scarce assuage,
Nor lull the fiery gale.

She was a sweet, a spotless flower;
A lily; but her stem
Could never brook the east-wind's power,
Whose fury nought may hem:
And even the evening dews so sweet
With the air that gently bore them,
Her Modest blossoms could not meet,
But softly closed before them.

The zephyr, too, which lightly play'd
With every smiling rose,
Could not sport with the lily that lov'd the shade,
Nor fan her budding snows.
Then let us not weep that the flower has flown
To a milder, fairer clime!
She blooms 'neath mercy's radiant throne
In the realms of endless time.

A nice point might be raised - did it greatly matter - whether the above lines apply indeed to our Cousin Agnes, or to the *Wilmot* who is thus alluded to in *Schoolboy Memories.*

That one long holiday, I now remember,
My uncle's home, and gentle Wilmot's grace:
*We* were child-lovers too! Ah, death's December
~~Even~~ E'en in life's brightest May, cut short her race:
Yea, 'neath her moon of marriage!

And here is another allusion to Wilmot from a later poem:

But Wilmot was an angel. Time can dim,
But not efface, her image.

And now on, on! I shall never have done. After spending the Christmas holidays with our father and mother in ~~England~~ London, we made the voyage by sea to Falmouth, on our way back to Helstone school. It was a memorable voyage. Our steam-boat was the old Shannon which shortly after that voyage was condemned as unseaworthy. The only first cabin passenger beside ourselves was a sick Iady on her way to re-join her husband. We came in for the most stormy ten days or fortnight of the year, and humanly speaking we must have been lost but for the Captain's prudence in putting into fresh harbour every night, unless indeed he kept in the same harbour for several nights running. In the West of England our crazy old steamer was believed to have gone down with all hands: but in London they knew better; and every day our father received comforting tidings at the ship-agent's office, conveyed I suppose by the telegraph then in vogue, which if I mistake not much resembled a windmill and made signals from distance to distance, and more especially from height to height,

through the land. There were on board a stewardess and a cabin-boy. This last much enjoyed telling us that he had heard the Captain say ‘We are all going to Davy Jones’ locker’ - carefully explaining that this meant the bottom of the sea. The sick lady became worse and worse. The stewardess and the Captain were most attentive, but the lady conceived a special affection for us brothers who relieved one another, turn and turn about, in nursing her. Then for the first time I heard my brother comfort the sick with prayer and reading -, an occupation in which he was to take delight through life. About the end of the first week of the lengthy voyage the lady was evidently near her end, and the sailors, when we next put into harbour, tenderly carried her on shore to a Hotel where she died that night without again meeting her husband in this world. When at last - after being driven back once or twice, - we steamed into Falmouth harbour - road I fancy is the technical term - amid bright sunshine and a Southern climate, the steamer’s arrival produced an unusual commotion, for as I have said, she had been given up. I wonder, do boats still meet vessels arriving at Falmouth, with specimens of copper ore for sale? How lovely these were. And what a pity that the purple and the gold and the green - and I know not how many other tints - should all resolve themselves, when smelted, into a dull copper! Congratulations we had met with in harbour; but it was not until we had taken a friendly leave of the Captain and put up at the Hotel in Falmouth that we understood to what extent we were looked on as alive from the dead. The landlady fairly kissed us, and the maids and men came all round us grinning. Owing to the length of the voyage, and some extra expenses, our money was gone, but that mattered little. Our father was well known by repute in Falmouth. Besides, were we not a sort of ship-wrecked mariners to be treated with all kindness? We slept that night at the Hotel, and very nice it was; and very nice was the early breakfast next morning that we might catch the early coach. This left for Helstone on winter mornings about daybreak. And all the kind people at the Hotel who were up and about gave us a cheer at parting. The arrival at school caused the most

excitement of all. Mrs Coleridge cried for joy, and Mr Coleridge was most benign, whilst the fellows grinned very much as the maids and ostlers had grinned at the Falmouth Hotel. I don't think my hands were caned for a long while in connection with the Eton Latin Grammar which besides by that time was no longer written in an entirely unknown tongue. Then came letters brimming over with thankfulness for our safety from home. Our past danger had made us, if that could be, doubly dear; and so it ever will be.

Even love's own joy divine
Shines so very fair,
Since that joy must intertwine
With sad doubt and care

That sweet bliss we costliest prize,
Which may fly:
O, how dear in mortal eyes,
All that die!

*Songs of Early Summer* by Archer Gurney

And now let me wind up this simple story of Helstone schooldays with the record of a little triumph achieved by Gurney Major. The time had come round for the annual prizes and speeches. I forget how the prizes went, bar what I am about to relate. Possibly Gurney major had a prize; certainly Gurney minor had not. Different passages from the English poets - let alone Greek and Latin - were entrusted to a lot of fellows to spout; and the Mayor and Corporation, if I mistake not, were to award the palm for the English speeches. There would be two awards for English speeches, one for the senior and the other for the junior boys. It is with this last that my story is concerned. The year before, this prize had been awarded to Archer, who on that occasion had been closely run by Frank Wright. This time Archer was

out of it, so far as getting the prize was concerned, since it was a rule that this particular prize should not be awarded to the same boy two years running. So then Wright, an excellent speaker, who recited ‘Ivry’, carried all before him. Then up rose Canon Rogers, and asked permission to present an extra prize to Gurney Major for his recital. The Canon’s proposition was received with acclamation, as was natural. What my brother had recited was the King’s speech in Henry the fifth, Act IV, Scene III.

> If we are marked to die, we are enough
> To do our country loss: and if to live,
> The fewer men the greater share of honour,
> God’s will! I pray thee wish not one man more.
> &c. &c. &c.

And now goodbye to Helstone, a long goodbye. The school, I am told, is not what it was, and what old Helstonians could wish it still to be - since Greek is no longer taught there -, yet has it my heartiest good wishes for its welfare; and may the fellows never cease to number among their worthies Charles Kingsley and Archer Gurney.

# Chapter V
# We go Abroad. Neuwied.
# 1833-1835

I have said that once in a way we spent our holidays in London, where on rare occasions we were taken to the Theatre. My brother - whose love for the Drama only deepened as he got older - never forgot the delirious joy of his first pantomime. One scene in particular would excite his mirth to the last year of his life: this represented the return of Guy, Earl of Warwick, from the Crusades, accompanied by his faithful squire. The extravagant joy of the Earl on beholding again his ancestral castle, and the if possible yet wilder antics of the honest and affectionate squire who shares his master's every emotion, went to make up the fun. I know not what famous performers were on the stage at that period, with one exception. Malibran was then playing to thin houses, her genius not being as yet fully discerned, although those who saw and heard her were transported with delight; indeed, the scanty audience was worked up night after night to the wildest pitch of enthusiasm. On one occasion at least our father was so fortunate as to hear her, when he dashed off the following: -

*Impromptu (May 1833)*

*On seeing Madame Malibran in the Opera of 'La Somnambula'*

Beauteous Somnambulist! While thou art dreaming,
Men's hearts are beating high, ladies' eyes streaming;
The young witch of love from thy bosom is bursting,
And the bard for the dew of thy red lips is thirsting.

Sweetest Somnambulist! While thou art singing,

Apollo his harp to thy honour is stringing;
And ever around thee, in sleep though reclining,
The torch of thy soul like a meteor is shining.

Dearest Somnambulist! waking or sleeping,
For thee many a warm heart for passion is aching;
And thy minstrel suspects it might cost him some sighing,
From thy charms, like the enamoured young Count, to be flying.

Loveliest Somnambulist! rouse thee from slumber,
Admirers are gazing on thee without number;
If thy sun appear set, it is but for a season,
For its disk is illumed by the light of thy reason.

My verdict on the above lines - strangely old fashioned as they are - is that real appreciation for genius inspired them. Our Grandmama Thompson wrote to her sister Miss Pigou, 'Malibran looks very pretty in her sleep, but pale and weak, and as if her soul were too much for her' - I cried, I don't know why. Gurney was so delighted, he came home and wrote verses upon her.'

My father's poetry had not always this old-fashioned ring. Here is an *Invocation* of his, which is not without a charm of its own, for *A Lady's Album*, which might almost date from recent days.

O ye whose souls can sympathise
With bold and bland emotions,
Whose minds beam flashing through your eyes,
Betokening loftiest notions -

Whose thoughts dance to the roundelay

Of Poesy - whose hours
Glide on full oft the live-long day
Mid fancy's classic bowers!

O ye of taste and melody
Come! - sweep with careless measure
Our minstrel lyre, that haply ye
May add unto our treasure.

Whether ye chant the impassioned song
Or woo the muse of painting,
Place some choice flowers our bays among,
Chaste hearts with bliss acquainting.

For music breathes in all things sweet,
In love in friendship true,
And each and everything we meet,
Sprinkled with passion's dew!

And let your gift be grave or gay,
As best unto you seemeth -
He sleeps not vainly life away,
Who tells of what he dreameth.

All at once we learnt, my brother and I, that we were not to go back to Helstone. No explanations were given at the time; but a simple putting of two and two together since then has made all plain enough. Our father had certainly 'outrun the constable', i.e., had got into debt. Those three contested elections, and the law-suit arising out of the last, must have cost many thousand pounds. The advowson of Thatcham had been sold without putting things straight. And, as we came to understand gradually, our father

had lost large sums at play besides. We learnt later that he paid when he lost, but, in the rarer instances when he won, did not exact his winnings. There was no reciprocity.

He was the kindest and most generous of men. Very high play went on at the Clubs and in society. I have seen an I.O.U. from the then Earl of S. to our father for £10,000. My father never exacted this – probably to do so might have involved the ruin of the loser, but he had a certain satisfaction in looking at it. This sort of thing could not answer.

My next recollection is that we took lodgings in Cecil Street, Strand, as I conjecture to be near the Thames, the highroad to the Continent - other father not being with us; and somehow (did we see him in a wig?) the idea was conveyed to our minds that he was in hiding. Perhaps we were in hiding too. Cecil Street, for peace and seclusion, might serve an anchorites turn, though so close to a mighty thoroughfare. Then presently, we the rest of the family not our father, went down by steamboat to the village of Grays situated on a flat and uninteresting portion of the river bank; but commending a fine view of the magnificent stream, which we were informed was a mile broad, with the shipping, and with the Kent coast looking pretty on the opposite side. Inland all was corn, except a little wood and some huge chalk pits, and the harvest was beginning. We found lodgings taken for us in a cottage adjoining the Bull Inn, which was a public house. The people of the public were civil, and we children had the run of their garden, into which a jolly tar, half seas over, would now and then enter, - I may not say intrude. The atmosphere was pervaded by beer and baccy, and I fancy a roaring trade must have been done at that public. We continued in these quarters for several days, until to our relief we went on board a steamboat bound for Rotterdam; and there we were, almost without knowing it, turning our backs on old England, and that for many a year! We little realised the tremendous change this involved. No more English

Schools; no more English ways and ideas; no more English food; and, to a considerable extent, no more ministrations of the English Church, though once and again we were to fall in with an English chaplain. The education that lay before us was a foreign one. Was the change in our case one for the better or the worse? We lost some things and gained others. We gained - if it be a gain - freedom from insularity, and a more than respectable knowledge of foreign literature without losing touch of our own. My brother, in particular, gained a love for directness and simplicity in verse, the effect of which is apparent in his poems. But we lost English school friendships, and very possibly we might have been less dreamy and more practical if we had stayed at home. Yet I question if we would have had things to be other than they were; and I believe we were far more patriotic than the general run of stay-at-homes, ~~whilst we returned~~ returning as we did eventually to England with a deep attachment to our limited Monarchy and National Church.

Here I find myself in luck, for I have chanced upon an old diary of our Mother's - only too short - in which she records the day and hour of our start for the Continent. We were leaving behind us our Grandmother Gurney and our Great-aunt Miss Pigou, but happily both had near relatives on whom to fall back. We who so started - to be joined presently by the head of the family - were our mother and her mother, the four children, Archer, Frances, Augustus and Richard, and a maid named Maria. Some of us were never to return to England, others were not to return for nine long and pleasant years. It is with regard to dates that my memory is apt to be shaky, while tenacious of incidents. I learn then from my mother's pretty running hand that we embarked from Grays at 10 o' clock in the morning on July 12th 1834 (three days before brother would be fourteen) in the *Remona* for Rotterdam. Throughout this chapter I avail myself of my mother's diary, and shall be then pleased when I can transcribe her very words. She does not mention what I perfectly remember, namely, that, same way further down the river the steamer was hailed by a small boat, and that our father

with a little air of mystery but in high spirits came on board. We had a joyful meeting. Our father could hardly derive much pleasure personally from Continental life. He never mastered French and German, speaking those languages after an abominable English fashion. No doubt he loved London best. But when all hindrances were removed to his return home - as they soon were - he continued with brief excursions on the Continent mainly for his children's sake -, a reduced income permitting to these a better education abroad than at home.

~~Our~~ My mother's diary records that the food on board the *Remona* was both dear and bad. The coast of Holland was as dull and uninteresting then as it is now; or can it have improved? When we entered the river Maas every feature of the landscape was disfigured by rows of trees planted with the utmost regularity and clipped quite close; and it was with satisfaction that the travellers, after a fair-weather passage, found themselves at Rotterdam, where they put up at the New Bath Hotel. ~~Our~~ My father whilst at Rotterdam made a linguistic discovery. Having lost his way he could make no one understand him until he fell back upon broad Cornish which, he averred, was readily responded to by the Dutchmen. We spent a Sunday in Rotterdam, where the women in their gala costume made a very gay appearance. Having sought vainly for apartments both in Rotterdam and at the Hague, we were in a manner compelled to proceed up the Rhine to Cologne. Plenty of fashionable people were on board - our mother names them - and the food on the Rhine steamboat (the Ludwig) was reasonable and good. In this river voyage one night had to be spent on shore at Arnheim in much discomfort. The tedious reaches of the Lower Rhine were enlivened by meeting an occasional raft or by running on a sand-bank. The Dutch and German ladies sat and knitted stockings all day just as if they had been in their own houses, whilst their husbands smoked. On the morning of July 17 we reached Cologne and comfort, and, after brief rest, the afternoon was given up to sight-seeing. Here let me quote some boyish

verses of my brother's about Cologne's Cathedral.

*Fragments from 'Arthur's Chant.'*

*Cologne.*

They, after resting, wander'd up and down
The narrow streets, and gazed 'till very late
On the Cathedral, deck'd as for some endless fête;

With its long lines of towering columns, far
Beyond imagination's boldest flight,
Its fretted roof, where twinkles many a star,
Full richly gleaming, and its flood of light
Pouring upon the charm'd beholder's sight
From niche and storied casement: - such a scene
So grand, so holy, yet so fair and bright,
Can ne'er in words be limn'd, but must be seen,
And felt, as all will own who there have pilgrims been.

There lurks a sacred magic in these piles
Of gothic art, a strange and nameless feeling;
Which, if our fancy long amid them whiles,
Comes o'er us like a midnight zephyr stealing,
So cold, and yet so gentle; thoughts reording,
Which slumber'd in our breasts, but ne'er till then
Had sprung to life before us: yet concealing
Still more which we half dream but may not ken -
The distant portal jars! we start, and wake again.

From *Spring*

A drive of 45 miles on the 18th of July in two open carriages brought us to Aix-la-Chapelle. We stopped to bait at Tulliers, not as yet rendered famous by Browning's sweet *Duchess Colombe*. At Aix we soon got into a handsome apartment, and into trouble. The Rue Neuve was a fine street to look at, but there was a dearth of drinkable water, and exhalations arose from the marshy ground. Before a month Archer and I were down with intermittent fever, and the only thing to be done was to leave. What struck us most perhaps at Aix were the loads of fruit in the marketplace, costing the merest trifle. There was a Redoute at Aix, where Rouge et Noir and Roulette were played. Our father never risked more than a few pieces at a public table. One evening he persistently backed the same little set of numbers at Roulette, and the ball as persistently came to a stop in that direction -, the result being that he came home with a hatful of silver coins -, as I suppose Thalers.

Being driven from Aix by the heat and bad smells and low fever we took a short flight to Neuwied on the Rhine, and en route we got our first glimpse of the Seven Mountains. Some two years Archer and I were to spend at Neuwied, but this we knew not on arriving. Those two years complete my brother's boyhood, and I trust I shall be forgiven if I dwell on them a little.

The town of Neuwied is clean and neat and modern. If I mistake not, the Prince of Neuwied reigned over 45 villages besides. The Prince's garden is - I had better say <u>was</u> - large and open to the public, but not beautiful. The palace was unremarkable. The Prince's sister, Louise, the intimate friend of our Queen Adelaide, and a most amiable Princess, kept house for her brother after a very simple fashion - the Prince's wife being in a madhouse. About 3 miles downstream on the opposite shore is Andernach one of the most ancient towns upon the Rhine, just as old as Neuwied is new. Neuwied owed its flourishing condition to the Prince's toleration of all religions at a

time when toleration was unusual. Lutheran and Calvinist, Moravian, Jew, Anabaptist and Romanist, all formed one happy family. Except among the Moravians, and it may be among the Romanists, there was said to be very little religious feeling. The immediate neighbourhood of Neuweid is scarcely pretty, but woods and mountains are visible in the near distance. In truth it is an ugly little town. The Moravians, with whom my brother and I were destined to make close acquaintance, had flourishing schools for boys and girls; and the excellence in particular of the boys' school gradually dawned upon our father.

We found comfortable lodgings at a cost of 20 Thalers a month, or £3, all besides being in proportion, in the house of a Mr Herborn, one of Neuwied's leading inhabitants. Mr Herborn was a lawyer, and in the employ of the Prince, while Madame was a confectioner. The daughters, five in number, and absolutely stayless, were most of them pretty girls. One of them had for lover a young Highlander, Mr Lockhart, very poor jealous and devoted, who was on his way - only that he lingered to join the Austrian army. The young ladies helped their mother in her department, but at the same time learnt to dance and sing and play. The head of the family was a mysterious man who foretold the day of our dear Grandmama Thompson's death, which to our grief occurred at Neuwied. She had brought with her from Aix-la-Chapelle the seeds of low fever, and as the Neuwied Doctors proved perfectly helpless, she gradually succumbed. Archer remembered every circumstance of her happy end, and how she - whose every second thought was music - dreamt she heard the angels' songs, which formed a cheering memory to him through life.

We three brothers used to walk by the side of the Rhine, where the town boys would annoy us by shouting '*blagarts*', and we would take little notice hoping they would the sooner drop off. One day whilst, as usual, Archer was spinning a yarn, some fellows pelted us with stones; so we thought it

best to come to close quarters. The enemy were 3 to 1, and their leader was a big chap. Archer shied away his walking stick disdaining to use it, and I am sorry to say the big fellow grabbed it. Hereupon Archer wrested it from him and laid on well all round. I fared badly, and Dick who was but small got a lot of kicks without returning them. The enemy having hurriedly retired, resumed their stone throwing -, a stone breaking one of my fingers. As this was the worst of our frays, so I think it was the last.

The idea of Neuwied School for us two elder boys (Dick was considered too young) became more fixed, but it was thought well that we should first get a smattering of German. So for several months the family remained at Neuwied with that object. It was a convenience also that the place was not far from England, to which our father presently returned for a while. Our master got us on the quicker that we were chattering at odd times with the Misses Herborn. How wondrously the German reading and copybooks were bound! My brother mastered German with great facility, quickly laying the foundation of that German scholarship in which I suppose he was eventually unsurpassed. On receiving from our father Schiller's works as a reward, he rendered, mere boy that he was, into English blank verse Schiller's *Turandot Princess of China* - itself a translation from the Italian of Gozzi.

Princess Turandot, a beauty complete, is troubled by many suitors, and, to get rid of them, devises the ingenious plan of propounding three desperate riddles to each lover - failing to solve which he loses his head. By this means the number of suitors thinned down. But still other victims present themselves, and among the rest Prince Kalaf, who succeeds in his dangerous enterprise. The princess loves him, but conceals her love and shilly-shallies to any extent.

*Pantalon's Description of Turandot's Condition*

Three times last night the Princess called me to her,
And in such hurry, that upon my honor,
She scarcely gave me time to put my feet
Within my slippers. I assure your highness,
It was no child's play: for my very beard
Gan bristling as in wintry sympathy
With my whole body: Then, when I arrived
In her fair presence, Gods! what maiden fears,
What whines, caprices, had I to contend with!

*Kalaf*
What might they be? or what resembled they?

*Pantalon*
Faith, nothing but themselves: but you shall hear.
She wished delay; but yet she would not ask it:
She loved your Highness, but she did not, dared not:
She'd ta'en an oath, and yet she would not say
What when or where! Your Highness was the pink
Of all perfection; young, accomplished, wise,
Brave, interesting, elegant, delightful,
The soul of honor and of gallantry,
With numerous similar Etceteras;
But then again you were tyrannical,
Proud, overbearing, arrogant, inhuman,
Hardhearted, base - in short, to sum up all,
A Man!

*Kalaf* (smiling)
I must plead guilty to that charge.

*Pantalon*
But such a man! She added, as must set
Young ladies' hearts a ~~breaking~~ beating, - all but her's!
Her's did not beat at all! - and yet, it did;
But not for you: or if perchance for you,
'Twas more forsooth in hatred, than in love!
She ended where she had begun! began
Where she had ended! and, in fact,
Gave evident proofs that she was head and ears
In love with Somebody: but then, of course,
Not with your Highness! for you were a Man!

How many hours of enchantment have I spent listening to my brother's verses just turned off the poetic anvil! Alas that he would so rarely reshape, or add a finishing touch! Impatience ever characterised him, and he clung through life to the to-him congenial maxim, 'First thoughts are best.' But, in the case of Turandot, I little question that our father retouched the verses here and there. Presently the play was published - this being my brother's first appearance in print.

There was a large public ball-room in the Herborn house, and this was the centre of all Neuwied festivities - for the Little Court was quiet enough. Some acquaintance existed between ~~our parents and~~ Princess Louise and our parents who were duly invited to rare festivities at the palace. The Princess took much notice of Archer on account of his rendering of *Turandot*, but she was kinder again to Dick showing him on one occasion ~~herself~~, I remember, all over the palace. I find that our father presented H.S.H. (Her Serene Highness) with some pretty birthday lines on March 11, 1835. The poet made the waves of the Rhine say all manner of agreeable things in his so-called *Song of the Rhine*. I quote the end only:

The voices grew faint, and yet fainter still,
And were finally lost round yon distant hill;
But the last sweet sound that swelled in the gale,
Was to lady's name which hath graced this tale:
Fair Louise! Good Louise of Wied! it cried,
Then trembling, faltering, sinking, died.

Dances and concerts came off in the Herborn ballroom, and we children must have gone to most of the concerts, which were instrumental and capital. A nickname which the pretty Misses Herborn had for my brother was 'Herr Professor', whence I conclude that he was already fond of argument.

Chief among our few friends at Neuwied was a Colonel Thorn and his family. They were hospitable people living in a comfortable house with a famous garden. The garden had long reaches of trellis-work covered with vines, and oh how good the grapes were! Colonel Thorn was German by birth, but would have passed anywhere as an Englishman. He was an old Anglo-Indian officer, and enjoyed of all things the society - hard to come by - of decent English folk, ourselves to wit. His wife was German, and his family more German than English. The old Colonel had written and published the history of some Indian campaign; and my brother and I revered him as a great historian. His one or two volumes, very large, and handsomely printed and bound, inspired us with respect. His history was lent to us, and we struggled through it as well as we could. At this distance of time I cannot say whether it was interesting or not, but I will vouch for our increased respect for the old ~~gentleman~~ warrior when we had read the modest references to himself which his work contained. A spirit of reverence towards our seniors was in us, a tendency to admire, and this tendency clung to my brother through life, whilst he never failed to plead

for it in others. The following couplet from Southey was among his favourite quotations:

> What! ‘art thou critical’ quote he, ‘eschew that heart’s disease,
> Which seeketh for displeasure where the intention is to please.’

Conceivably Colonel Thorn may have been a bit of a bore; but for us he has ever remained a type of what so many old Anglo-Indian officers are, a thorough gentleman, with whom to associate was good and elevating, whose very meanderings were enjoyable.

We spent the Christmas of 1834 in the Herborns’ house, and were lost in admiration of the delightful cakes and bonbons prepared for sale on the occasion. On Christmas Eve we were admitted, as I think by favour, to a festival service in the Moravian place of worship, in which the sexes are separated. What follows is from my mother’s diary. On one side of the church the Moravian sisters dispensed tea and rolls; and on the other side the Moravian brothers officiated in the same manner. Very sweet singing was carried on all the while -, the singers relieving one another. Not even the jarring of a cup could be distinguished; and the sisters, with their delicate white caps, white aprons, and white kerchiefs pinned over their dark dresses, looked patterns of neatness. Tea being over, there was given to every child in the church a lighted wax taper, producing a pretty illumination, typical of the light that came into the world at that season. The children standing up with their tapers sang a hymn, the officiating brother spoke briefly, and the service was at an end.

Upon our return home we were informed that some mystery was toward, into which we should be initiated at the proper moment. Sure enough, a bell was rung, and in obedience to its summons we rushed into a room which was a blaze of light, and there we beheld a round table spread with a white

cloth and covered with cakes and bonbons, a pile for each one of us, not forgetting our English maid. In particular a cake made for our sister in the shape of a large heart had '*Miss Fanny*' beautifully written upon it in sugar - , whilst the Herr Professor, Archer, was treated with distinction. On the table's centre, stood a Christmas-tree heavily laden with good things. Our father was at this time in England, but our mother was specially remembered, for to her was assigned by Madame Herborn a China rose-tree in full bloom, hung round about with little cakes and bonbons of the most superlative description - whilst at its side stood a splendid family cake . I know what I had too, but I shan't tell! Could anything be kinder? That was our first introduction to a Christmas-tree table.

Great excitement prevailed when the old year melted into the new. For us this time was ushered in by another service in the Moravian church interrupted as the clock struck twelve by a blast of trumpets. The organ chimed in, and the singers gave forth 'Now praise the Lord.' Into many eyes came tears; but these were soon dried up outside the church, for the street was full of people nearly mad with joy, and everybody addressed his neighbour with good wishes for a happy new year - the received formula, as it appeared to us, being 'Gross neu Jahr'! Can it have been '*Prosit* das neue Jahr'? pronounced in the pretty German fashion, Bro-st! and generally abbreviated?

# Chapter VI

As noted elsewhere this chapter is missing from the manuscript. There is evidence to suggest that it was seen by Wilfred Gurney soon after the *Memoir* was discovered in 1941. Both versions of his summary of the *Memoir* include material that is not found elsewhere and which would fit best into the missing Chapter VI:-

> ‘When the two boys entered the school [at Neuwied] as boarders, the rest of the family moved to Frankfort. My father [Augustus] and Uncle Archer were happy at the school, and very well fed. They played a game called ‘Stilts.’ They spoke German only, and my father [Augustus] says he even prayed his private prayers in the German language.’

# Chapter VII
# Weimar
# 1836-1837

The winter of 1836-7 found the whole family at Weimar where our father and mother had a very gay time. I question if the gaiety was foreseen. What induced us to go Weimer I know not - unless it were that no apartment was to be had at Dresden, over-crowded for the Parliamentary Session. The only conceivable attractions at Weimar were the Court and the Theatre, and we were, I think, unaware how agreeable both of these would prove. Schiller had been dead for some years, and Goethe between four and five years, so our choice was not biased by any wish to encounter those great poets. Weimar was an ordinary little Residenz-Stadt to the outer eye, but it proved far from dull for people in society. Our compatriots could be numbered on the ten fingers. There were five Misses Macdonald and a Miss Swain, and several young and very gentlemanly Englishmen or Scotchmen, viz. two Drummonds, a Campbell, and a Dalrymple. I suppose these young people were mostly learning German at Weimar. The country around may be very pretty in summer, but in the winter it was dismal enough and mostly covered with snow. We had some lively sleigh drives and saw a super-abundance of game - especially hares and pheasants. Our house was in the Theater-Platz, and as we often went to the Theatre this was convenient. The dress-tier was divided into noble and not-noble (bürgerlich) - an offensive arrangement, and sufficient to account for any amount of bad blood. This however had little effect on us who were reckoned among the nobility, Herr Graf and Frau Gräfinn being the titles commonly bestowed upon our father and mother by those who knew no better. The acting was excellent independently of distinguished visitors from other Theatres who now and then took a ‘Gast-rolle.’ The Grand Duke subsidised the theatre with a handsome grant out of his private purse, and the Grand Duchess passed on

her best dresses to the chief actresses. Artists were made welcome at Weimar and treated with honour. Archer wrote a *Song of Saxe Weimar*, in which he noted this fact. I quote a verse.

Bernhard the mighty, proud hero of story,
All in war's annals as foremost proclaim:
His were the hardly earned laurels of glory,
Still bounds the heart at the sound of his name!
Bright though his banners, and keen though his sword,
Dearer to me was sweet poesy's lord:
He who each bard as a diamond did treasure,
He who in graces and gifts knew not measure,
He who was patron of love, life, and pleasure.

Doubtless the distinction which Schiller and Goethe - not to mention Herder and Wieland - had experienced at the hands of the Court, had left behind a high estimate of what was due to genius. The Court of Weimar had honoured itself in honouring those poets, and the result was a sort of 'noblesse oblige' feeling towards all artists.

When we were at Weimar Hensell was the Court pianist; and not even his fascinating successor, Liszt, can have been more petted and indulged. Poet, alas, in our time, there was none to make much of.

Archer and I - Richard too - revelled in the Weimar Theatre. The cost of seats was modest, and the hours very early. At Weimar we made our first acquaintance with a stage version of *Faust, Part I*. There also we saw many plays of Schiller. Among these some that most impressed us on the stage were The *Maid of Orleans*; *Don Carlos*, with its somewhat pompous plea for 'Gedanken-freiheit'; *Wallenstein's Lager* - for which the Grand Ducal garrison served famously - with its unequalled dash and marvellous rhymes

all but untranslatable, perhaps quite so; *Maria Stuart*; and the immortal *Braut von Messina*, metrically and otherwise beautiful. Among Archer's boyish notes I found this passage:

> 'What a magnificent and above all what a charming author Schiller is! How different from Goethe! The latter's wisdom may call forth our admiration, but Schiller excites all our best sympathies and makes us feel ourselves better kinder and more charitable than before we read his works. What an exquisite play *The Maid of Orleans* is. How affecting is the timid but still faithful love of the poor Raymond evinced by him his conduct towards Jeanne at end of the 4th Act when all else desert her.'

Then follows, written a little later,

> 'Goethe is more affecting still however. Witness *Herrmann und Dorothea.*'

Operas were given at the Weimar Theatre as well as plays, and I know not which were the ~~most~~ more delightful.

Let it remain a moot point whether the having Schiller and Goethe's memories - the last in all its freshness - before our mental sight, and the fact that we talked with people who had known those great poets well, influences my brother's imagination. We were intimate with a most agreeable daughter-in-law of Goethe's, Madame de Goethe, and Dick and I were playfellows of his granddaughter, Alma von Goethe, then a child, who died in early youth. It was at Weimar in any case, in the midst of this Goethian and Schillerian atmosphere, that - with the exception of *Turandot* - my brother began that long series of renderings from German poetry which forms part of his poetical 'Nachlass', or unpublished literary ~~inheritance~~ heritage, and will I trust yet see the light. Let me here already

subjoin one or two echoes of those Teuton strains. Take then the following fragment from *The Bride of Messina*.

*Chorus*
Now that the flambeau of concord is lighted,
Chasing to darkness pale doubt and dismay,
Now that the Princes in peace have united,
Speak, brothers! How shall we while time away?
Man must have somewhat to hope or to fear,
The feast or the battle, the bride or the bier.
Today we carouse and tomorrow we mourn.
Or how could the weight of existence be borne?

*Semi-chorus*
Peace may be sweet! Like a fair smiling child
Deep in the vale by the murmuring brook;
Near him the Iambs in their gambols so wild
Leaping around on the soft flow'ry nook;
From his gay mountain pipe streams of meadows pouring
Whilst echoes from all the green meadows reply,
Or lulled by the waves gently bending and soaring
Whilst floating on lilies 'neath evening's bright sky.
But, war, noble war, has its honour and fame,
The ruler and lord of the fate of mankind.
Mine be a shining, a glorious name,
Rising and falling, in darkness and flame,
Now fann'd by the zephyr now blown by the wind!

Take also the latter half, for brevity's sake, of *The Garden Scene from Faust*.

*A Garden*

*Margaret hanging on Faust's arm, Martha with Mephistopheles, pacing to and fro.*

*Martha*
Indeed, poor woman's in a piteous case:
Who could convert a settled bachelor?

*Mephistopheles*
It needs your like, a mirthful form and face,
To show a wife is worth the searching for.

*Martha*
Now, prythee, say, good sir, - have you found nothing yet?
Was your heart never caught in Cupid's net?

*Mephistopheles*
The proverb says, A home, a trusty wife,
Have aye been found the rarest pearls in life.

*Martha*
I meant, if you had never felt an inclination.

*Mephistopheles*
I have been oft received with grace and kindly estimation.

*Martha*
Yes, but I mean, did your heart never feel sincerely?

*Mephistopheles*

He who would play with women's hearts must rue his follies dearly.

*Martha*
Ah, sir, you do not understand!

*Mephistopheles*
For that blame my benightened mind!
And yet, I understand that you are very, very kind.
(They pass)

*Faust*
You knew me then, when in this stranger-guise
I entered yonder little garden gate.

*Margaret*
Did you not see? I strove to veil mine eyes.

*Faust*
And you forgive my freedom, when of late
I greeted you with such audacity,
And you so aptly answered me?

*Margaret*
I was confused, I knew not what to say,
Nought evil had of me been ever spoken.
'What?' thought I, 'Has he seen some mark or token
Of boldness in my mien or guise today?
Why did he else to me his words address?
Did I perhaps deserve no less?' -
And, let me own the truth, - some little elf
For you within my heart would softly sue;

I was in sooth right angry with myself
That I should not have felt more vexed with you.

*Faust*
Sweet love!

*Margaret*
Ah, let me try!

*(She gathers a daisy and plucks off the leaves one by one)*

*Faust*
A flowr's born mystery!

*Margaret*
No, 'tis a simple game.

*Faust*
And what?

*Margaret*
You will but laugh at me!

*(She plucks and murmurs)*

*Faust*
What murmurest thou?

*Margaret (half aside)*
He loves me - loves me not.

*Faust*
Sweet star of heav'n, that lights earth's darkest spot!

*Margaret (As above)*
Loves me - not - loves me - not -

*(Plucking the last leaf with sweet joy)*
He loves me!

*Faust*
Yes, fairest child! O, let this flowery oracle,
Be the gods' sentence! Yes, he loves thee.
Feel'st thou what this would say? He loves thee!

*(He takes both her hands in his)*

*Margaret*
I shudder.

*Faust*
O, fear not! Fear not! Let this look,
Let this soft pressure, tell thee
That which no tongue can tell!
Self to resign, to feel a joy, a rapture,
Which is, which must be, endless!
Endless! Its end would be despair!
No end! No end!

*Margaret presses his hand, then disengages herself and flies.*
*He stands a moment lost in thought, then follows.*

*Martha* (coming forward)
The night draws nigh.

*Mephistopheles*
Yes, and we must away.

*Martha*
If this were not so scurrilous a place
I should entreat you longer here to stay;
But really, mine is now a piteous case.
My reputation soon might prove in danger:
You, sir, are yet a stranger,
And this to folks' abuse might give some handle.
Do what one will, there's none can scape from scandal.
Where is our youthful pair?

*Mephistopheles*
Like summer birds at play,
Roaming from bough to bough, fanned by the odorous wind,
Yonder they flew.

*Martha*
He seems to her right well inclined.

*Mephistopheles*
And she to him. Thus runs the world away.

By good luck, our father, the Herr Graf, had attended a few levêes at home in England, and had brought his court suit abroad with him. These things, and an introduction from Mr Forbes our Minister at the Court of Dresden, procured for our father and mother the entrée at the Weimar Court. It would

be difficult to exaggerate the geniality and kindness of the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess - and the whole Court took their tone from them. The Grand Duchess was a daughter of the Emperor of Russia, and a most gracious personage; and on her depended very much the dignity of the Court. The Grand Duke, Charles Frederick, was easy-going and good-natured, and caused his wife no further anxiety than such as arose from ungovernable fits of temper. When in a rage he would freely thrash his menservants, and next day beg their pardon and give them money. The servants were said to place themselves in their master's way for the express purpose of being thrashed. What pleasant vails servants got in those days without being thrashed. How well we boys remembered seeing - not without ~~envy~~ a thrill – ~~seeing~~ money slipped under the candlesticks by guests in our house when the whist players broke up, and this money was for the servants. Our father somewhat flagged at last in his attendance at Court, although treated there with a most friendly consideration; our mother did not tire at all. And yet, if I am right in holding that agreeability is the leading mark of a courtier, then our father was a born courtier.

*[At this point in the manuscript the following note has been added by Wilfred Gurney, referring to the paragraph that follows.*

> *'Father's version was slightly different as told to me. Longfellow asked him if he was any relation of a Mr R.G. who was, whom he had met on the Rhine and Father told him he was his father. Sybella Branford']*

Longfellow, no mean judge, told Archer, when walking home with him from a friend's house in Paris, that he considered his father was the most delightful specimen of an English gentleman he had ever known. They had met many years previously in Germany. The Grand Duke's whist-tables were no doubt pleasant enough, but our father's indifferent French and worse German must have made even these a bore to him. So then business

called Mons. de Gournay away to London for a few weeks. As he was taking leave, the Grand Duchess honoured him with a commission to bring her an Irish poplin, then fashionable; and on his return to Weimar he had the happiness to present her with a beauty. Madame de Gournay, you may be sure, received a lovely poplin too, if less costly. The Grand Duke sent by the traveller to our reigning Sovereign, William the IV, friendly messages, which I fear the traveller may have failed to deliver, he not being on that footing of intimacy with his Britannic Majesty which the Grand Duke had been pleased to take for granted.

One must go back to the days of the Stuarts, I imagine, for a Court constantly open to private gentlemen in England - see Scott's account of Charles the 2nds Court in *Peveril of the Peak*; but a state of things approaching to this accessibility existed yet at the Court of Weimar in the winter of 1836-7. That is to say, if my memory serves me, invitations were only issued on extraordinary occasions, - ordinary receptions being open to those who had been once presented. Thursdays and Sundays were regular Court days, On the evening of each of those days there was a reception at the Castle; and on Sunday the entire Court circle was made welcome to an early dinner. We three boys - not of course our sister Fanny who was always an invalid - went once by special invitation to a children's ball at the Castle; and very delightful we thought it. In the absence of English boys at Weimar we became good friends with German boys, and among these, with an old Neuwied school-fellow, Gabriel von Gross. Our father, the Herr Graf, was sometimes of the Grand Duke's shooting parties, when over a thousand head of game would be slaughtered in a battu. The Grand Duke was a bad shot - and everybody, with the exception of Charles Frederick himself was aware that his chief game-keeper stood behind him, fired as he fired, and gave credit for the hit to his master.

Once we entertained the Grand Duke -, not the Grand Duchess. The Grand

Duchess was to be met however once in a way at a private house; and even we boys so met her at Madame de Schwendler's, on occasion of some private theatricals and tableaux vivants got up mainly by our compatriots. One tableau I remember. Miss Flora Macdonald and Mr Campbell represented her namesake and the young Pretender, and charmingly they looked. Archer had a lot to do. He opened proceedings, as Fame, by a speech in German proclaiming the intended entertainment, and complimenting the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess. And other work was cut out for him besides. There still exists a faded album presented to my brother by the Grand Duchess for his declamation on that evening of Goethe's magnificent Epilogue to his unwritten tragedy of *Essex* -, the speaker being Queen Elizabeth. This epilogue was made choice of, I imagine, on account of its English theme, and to say that Archer spoke it finely is not to say too much. Thus it opens. It is too long to give as a whole. The rendering is my brother's.

(*The Queen speaks. Courtiers are present.*)

And Essex died? - Unhappy one, no more!

Through thee the axe was poised and stream'd the gore.
Deep cunning, guilt, too late their haunts, I know.
Yet half I doubted while ye struck the blow;
Like one, who warms a snake within her breast,
And dreams, it may not sting but fondly rest.
- no sound, no breath, offend this much-wrong'd heart!
Essex is gone; and ye have played your part.
Arm thee, my soul! Dread not remorse's pains!
Leave me, all, leave me! – England's Queen remains.

*(All retire. The Queen advances)*

Let her remain, on this bleak day of woe
One hasty glance o'er all her Past to throw.
For it befits her, graced by crown so bright,
Her, fortune's arbitress, the world's delight,
Ever herself, clearly all things to see,
Then others dream, studd'd by adversity.

&c. &c. &c.

The Grand Duchess thanked my brother prettily at the time, and shortly after came the album containing the signatures of the Grand Duke, his wife, and son, as follows: Charles Frederick Grand-Duc de Saxe, ce 11 de Janvier 1837; Marie Grande Duchesse de Russie et de Saxe; Charles Alexandre Grand-Duc hêréditaire de Saxe . - One of Madame de Schwendler's guests, the Countess d'Egloffstein, undertook to apply a touch of roue to the performers. She was not free from innocent malice, and when she came to my brother she applied the rouge so superabundantly as to make his mother, who had previously been thanking her for her good-nature, very uncomfortable. However, the rouge mattered the less since Archer was totally unconscious of his flaming cheeks, and acquitted himself so well as to leave his audience almost equally unconscious. The English Farce performed upon the occasion was *Bombastes Furioso*, and I was one of three Britons to whom was addressed the command 'Begone, brave army, and don't kick up a row!'

A few names of our Weimar friends are Goethe, Herder, Helldorf, Henkel, Gross, Frisch, Schwendler, Spiegel, Santi, Egloffstein, Watsdorf, Pappenheim, Gersdorf, Schulenberp, Fitzthum, Stein, &C.- Almost all these people entertained. Society games were all the rage. These were not always intellectual. For instance, a piece of cotton would be placed on the middle of the table round which the company were seated. Then everyone blew at

the cotton hard as they could; and he or she upon whom it chanced to alight was obliged to have a pair of mustachios with burnt cork.

And now to come down somewhat from these social altitudes. For some reason, connected as I surmise with the borrowing of money, our father was under obligations to a vulgar old English Jew, a Mr Solomons let us say, a bachelor, who was British Consul somewhere. All honour to Jewish gentlemen, but this was none. He had great mutton-chop whiskers, and curly black hair, a huge double chin, a big frame with much rotundity of stomach, legs of an atrocious build, and a pompous manner. I admit there is little harm in him so far, but patience! This Consul was pleased to visit Weimar, whilst we were there, on our account, and we boys were bidden to be civil to him. It was very shortly after his coming that our father left for England, or he might have kept him in order. The old wretch must needs go to the Weimar Court too in his Consular uniform, and there figure as our friend. This was trying, but worse was to come. We knew that he was dreadfully quarrelsome and disagreeable at cards, but that was a trifle. About dusk - the time when wild beasts go on the prowl - he would enter a pastrycook's shop with one of us boys, on whom he would bestow a cake or two, and majestically gobble any number of little cakes and macaroons, whilst only confessing to a few; and he would artfully vary his happy hunting ground from sunset to sunset! ~~Richard~~ Dick and I only ventured to marvel at this performance; but Archer gathered all his courage together and remonstrated. There was much to hinder him from so doing, for one thing reverence for age, add for another a much misplaced expectation of some good to arise to himself from the great man who had boasted that he would introduce Archer to the diplomatic service. What old Solomons had done during the two or three weeks of his stay at Weimar was to work Archer well as his honorary private secretary. In particular he got him to compose and write some Consular Report or other in good German. So then my brother shyly but firmly did his duty. And hereupon ensued an explosion of

wrath with the thrice blessed result that H.M.'s Consul returned forthwith to where he came from. Then a little storm broke loose. The reading-room had been robbed of its papers. Gentlemen had been cheated at cards, when playing for trivial stakes, the Court could do nothing but talk of and abuse old Solomons. Such a monster coming amongst them was an era in their lives. He was the hawk in the dovecot. And it could not be denied that he had come under our wing. It was a full week before the Grand Duchess smiled on our mother again.

I was sent to a day-school at Weimar. It was decidedly 'bürgerlich', but I don't think I minded that. What I disliked was the unearthly hour at which school opened on those bitter winter mornings. So early that our servants were not about, and I had to get my breakfast at a baker's shop near the school. Archer had masters at home, and Dick must have got a little learning from his mother. Our landlady, a most respectable person, and her niece Mina, lived on the ground floor of the house we occupied. Fraulein Mina was a clever and romantic girl, who threw herself with ardour into my brother's German poetical studies. As I think, not the slightest incursion into the 'pays tendre' was made by these young people. Archer was only sixteen. The young lady's 'Stamm-blatt' lies before me, of which the inscription ends thus calmly:

> 'Erinnere dich au eine Freundinn welche dich auch in der Entfernung stets achten und lieben wird. Mina M. Weimar den zyten Febr. 1837'

They corresponded for some time, but they never met again. The date just given marks, I doubt not, the time of our leaving Weimar for Dresden, whither we betook ourselves in the early Spring.

# Chapter VIII
# Dresden. En route.
# 1837

At Dresden that bright and pleasing city, we spent several Spring months in 1837. Before entering however on Saxon joys let me hark back for a brief space to Weimar in order that I may record the sad story of Mina, as told in my brother's verse.

*Mina*

*Weimar Memory*

A pensive mourner, sad, sweet, gentle maid,
Round whose white brow was clasp'd the plain black braid,
She told this tale to me, a wondering boy,
But yet sixteen, in accents faint as coy,
With lingering sweetness like the ghost of joy.
No fancy find a place but only truth
In this sad record of my early youth!

Her orbs were deep as night's unfathom'd skies,
Then stars, through low'ring clouds, just reach your eyes.
Her form was slender, of proportions frail;
Her countenance was fair, but very pale.
She might for melancholy's queen be ta'en
In Durer's painting, won to life again.
With hearts believing listen to the strain!

She lived with widow'd aunt, who little cared

To pierce her grief, and no fond secret shared;
Endowed with active household virtues she,
But scarce with that best boon, heart-sympathy.
And Mina owned few friends in Weimar's bound,
There rank from rank is stiffly wall'd around.

By grim convention's rules; nor burghes e'er
With pettiest noble may associate there.
To seek the body's cure, or soul's alas!
Degrades the 'noble' so, he loses class.
This woeful theme with parlous ills is fraught,
But to our tale. - Thus Mina's father thought.

A younger child of line patrician he,
Whose soul rebell'd against class-tyranny.
Aside his fettering rank he calmly laid
And studied medicine; quite as vile a trade
In elder brother's eyes, who shunn'd the youth;
But he by grave researches master'd truth,
(Far as such guerdon mortal toil may bless;
Alas the wisest own, they mostly guess;)
So, in due time, physician learn'd became
And in the country settled; this his aim
The doctor of the fields and meads to prove,
To peasants object of revering love.

In Saxony's remotest woods he dwelt,
Where the Reuss-Princes' yoke is scarcely felt;
For gentle sovereigns are those rulers small,
And mightier empires seem more like to fall.
He wedded maid of beauty still and rare

Most palely sweet, most spiritually fair,
Like lily in some fissured rock chance-sown,
Midst those dark forests bred. One child alone
She bore him, some ten years that child did guide
On truth and honor's path, and then, she died.

x x x x
x x x x

At last, one night, the maid, who trancëd slept,
A vision viewed, from which she waking wept:
That mother stood before her, as she moved
In actual life, and eyed her child beloved
With pity long; then, at the last, thus spake,
'Would that e'en now thy soul could, freed, awake!
List, dearest: Eight more years shall o'er thee roll,
Then, when matured by time and thought thy soul,
A mortal danger on thy path must rise,
And thou shalt perish, drear misfortune prize,
Save thou exert'st the will, was given to save,
But which may prompt thee but to dig thy grave.'

She said, and vanish'd. Mina, weeping, woke. -
She told the tale.
'And is this all?' I spoke.
Can you indeed brood o'er such childish dream?'
'I was no child', she said, 'nor this could fancy seem.
I know, 'twas Heav'n, the solemn warning gave;
It is my Mother who has stoop'd to save
To this cold earth of care and gloom again;
And now two years will make the warning plain,

For then the destined term shall life complete.’

‘Dismiss these visions, said I, ‘Mina, sweet!
These desolate thoughts, in dark pine forest bred,
Where scarce the sunshine flicker’d overhead.
Few cloudlets now on your horizon lie.
You shall be happy! I proclaim it, I.’
She forced a laugh, while I so fondly chid,
And bade her smile; she smiled because I bid;
For, as told you, true friends sworn were we;
And many a frank confession made she me.

Kindly we parted, for to other shore
Our travel’s destiny my footsteps bore;
Yet correspondence frank we oft renew’d,
And still her letters proved her sad of mood
Until a blank of some six months ensued.
Then writ I to another Weimar friend
To ask how Mina fared,
Ye guess the end.
The mother’s prophecy proved darkly true.
One all unworthy wooed, and won her too,
Who bare no good repute in Weimar’s town,
Whom she suspected half, yet drugg’d suspicion down.

They wedded and to Paris made repair
To pass the honeymoon. Sojourning there,
This wretch, possess’d by her blind confidence
Of all her worldly havings, stole from thence;
And left her orphan’d, lonely in the world.
Then, in one hour, to woe’s abysses hurl’d

From capture's height, for dearly had she loved, -
By worse than death, the loved one's treason proved,
Blank madness o'er her shattered senses crept,
And never more poor Mina pray'd or wept.

Her death soon follow'd. 'Tis a piteous tale.
But truth, I promised, should alone prevail.
Each from the facts his own conclusion draw.
For me, this memory fills my soul with awe.
Sleep, gentlest Mina, sweetly, calmly sleep!
Those deep fond eyes shall wake no more to weep.
Above, despite thy self delusion wild,
I'll trust, the happy mother clasps her child.

Whilst at Dresden we were so fortunate as to have a tutor of learning and culture who gave his whole time to us, but did not live under our roof. Was his name Herr Dzonti? I think so. In our vagabond youth we did not often have such a chance. Our tutor was a young Lutheran Minister, and was engaged to a ~~young~~ good and pretty girl. They had not many groschens between them, and their marriage depended on his being appointed to the spiritual charge of some Lutheran Gemeinde. This appointment tarried, and the lovers bore the delay beautifully. Once we heard our tutor - I am too uncertain about his name to repeat it – preach a 'Concurrenz-Predigt', a competitive sermon, on which great things depended. He had talked it over with Archer, who naturally took an Anglican believer's line, and urged it with precocious earnestness. Woe and alas the while! When the day of trial came our tutor had got his sermon by heart and spoke it without book before a considerable assembly of 'alten Perücken', masters in the Lutheran Israel. The sermon struck us as being long, learned, and perhaps only moderately orthodox, a little in the 'Paul opineth and I partly agree with him' style, and yet first rate in its way; but so it was, it was accounted

somewhat narrow and conventional, and the ~~question~~ appointment in question went to a 'Herr Candidat' endowed with more liberal views. Let me hope that the defeated candidate was more fortunate at the next Concurrenz - even should his success have involved a trifle less of orthodoxy!

How well our tutor played on the piano and sang, not removing his pipe from the corner of his lips for all his playing and singing! Once he gave a little fete to our mother and to his pupils - coffee and cakes - in his ~~large and~~ barely furnished sitting room, of which the chief ornaments were a piano and a porcelain stove. The pretty Fraülein was there, and did the honours, I hope their gentle lives were soon united. Our tutor initiated us into those friendly, orderly, public gardens, within a walk or short drive of Dresden, where you sipped coffee, or if you pleased a delicate Saxon beer with a slice of lemon, and listened to an admirable band. Sunday was a day second to none for these little 'al fresco' entertainments; and I question if we were duly shocked when seeing German ladies engaged in knitting on that day instead of sitting idle. How good the dinners were that reached us daily from a restaurant; and how exciting it was to forestall the servant and open out those metal dishes which arrived all compact, one on the top of another, and fastened together by a leather band! Few researches might be compared for interest with ours, as we passed in array their savoury contents.

Again, as at Weimar, the theatre formed our chief delight. We had convinced our indulgent father - only too willing to be convinced - that a so good and cheap lesson in pure German was not to be got elsewhere. Madame Schröder Devrient was a chief musical star whilst we were at Dresden. She sang and acted splendidly. Thanks to the early hours, our mother had us in bed and asleep - after saying our prayers - by ten. Might not some London manager try the experiment of early hours and cheap

prices, combined with excellence? Afternoon performances and high prices seem an insufficient concession.

Another satisfaction awaited us at Dresden which we had missed at Weimar. A Lutheran service was all we could take part in in the city of Schiller and Goethe, supplemented by reading the psalms and lessons at home; but in Dresden we had the regular ministrations of an English chaplain. We loved Dresden, though we had but few acquaintances. ~~there~~. Enviable is the lot of young English ladies who are sent to school there; and if they are musicians, what a chance is theirs to perfect themselves in the production of sweet sounds. Music was ~~going on~~ to be heard all day everywhere, and I question if the stern law had yet been passed which ordains that every window shall be closed, inside of which a piano is going. What a 'Tintamarre' must have preceded that decree!

Before leaving Dresden we passed a day or two in the slightly disappointing so-called Saxon Switzerland - it being planned that we should spend our summer in the real Switzerland, with which I suppose - given fine weather - never was intelligent man or woman disappointed yet.

Accordingly, the early summer of 1837 found us on our way to Lucerne, whither we proceeded, as our manner was - there being then no railways - in our father's travelling chariot with post horses. It was a long journey, via Prague and Innsbruck, a round-about way. As there was a rumble behind, and a coachbox in front we packed in comfortably. For some reason the rumble was our favourite seat. Many a pleasant hour have I spent there with one or other of my brothers, or with the head of the family -, once in a way too with our mother. Archer remained grand at telling tales: he literally bubbled over with invention, so that to have him at one's side was prime. Our plan was - his and mine - for each to seek in turn for inspiration from some object on his own side of the high road. Perhaps an old house, or a

tower, or a wood, or a queer-looking mortal, turned up, anything gave the signal for a tale. The tales ought to have been told turn and turn about, but were not so. Archer's were ~~for the more part~~ German in spirit, mysterious and romantic. Mine were much below par, and for the more part I excused myself from them. We made our approach to Switzerland by the Tyrol (we could never bring ourselves to say the Tyröl), and, as it chanced, we were beset in the land of Hofer for several successive days by incessant rain and mist. One happy moment we had at the post-house on the Adler Pass, where we benumbed outsiders were warmed with cherry brandy and hot plum cake. The consequence of all this mist was that my brother, like a poet who must needs give lasting expression to the feelings of the moment, wrote a depreciatory sonnet on the Tyrol, and reserved his warmest praises for Switzerland, as thus:

*Tyröl*

Thou sombre mountain-land, thou famed Tyröl,
A shadow on my spirits mirror liest,
For night enswathed us on thy mountain highest,
And evermore thy mists did round us roll.
With fitful intermission, five long days
Of darkness proved our guerdon. So I treasure
A dream confused, that yields me pain, no pleasure,
Of thy steep heights, - dim vales; - and may not praise.
Twain cliffs gigantic, towering either side
Through thick damp mist, dull rain, fierce breezes sighing,
The fall of torrents, seen through shades to sink
Precipitous, - once more these past me glide,
Then I invoke thine image. Echo, dying,
Breathes hoarse, 'The sad Tyröl!' - I sit and think.

*Switzerland*

But thou, glad Switzerland, in royal splendour,
In open-hearted bounty lying free,
Of thee I bear a memory, fresh as tender,
Thy blue lakes' grace, thy mountains' majesty.
I love thee. Never shines the sun more brightly
Than on thy hoary snows, thy pastures green:
Tyrol beside thee seems a vision nightly:
But thy bold glories best at morn are seen;
When upward steal the mists, and forth from slumber
Come giant cliff, rosecrown'd, and upland wide:
Thy heart-restoring splendours who shall number?
Thy very storms have ne'er a sullen pride:
Thou hast a free, and she an angry soul,
And therefore love I thee, and chide the grave Tyrol.

From *Spring*.

The entrance into Switzerland how enchanting is it from most directions; and how it stirs the heart to first catch sight of the snowy alps!

# Chapter IX
# Lucerne
# 1837

At Lucerne we spent three or four months of magnificent summer weather. On our arrival we put up at *The Swan*, then the Grand Hotel; but before long we inhabited a new and handsome villa, the villa Segesser, near the lake and about half a mile from the little cathedral. The Segesser family occupied the second story, and we had the rest of the villa. The Segessers were nice people, and took us into their affection. Herr Segesser was a Chemist, the only one in Lucerne, and at that time also the head-magistrate (Landamman) of the Canton. Madame Segesser must have been dead since I cannot recall her. They were well-to-do people, and had a second house, the villa Stutz, on the ~~other~~ opposite and wilder shore of the lake. They had several boats too of which they made us free. O the glories of those summer sunsets! Every evening whoever might be in the garden would rush excitedly into the house shouting 'Come out, come ~~directly~~ quickly, the sunset is more glorious than ever!'

One night I spent a 'nuit blanche', that is, I could not sleep, the tea overnight having been too strong. It was tiresome, but the early morning was to bring compensation. From 3 to 5 I stood at my ~~bedroom's~~ open window which faced the lake, and saw the day break. The air was sweet, and it was my loveliest experience. First a little mist cleared away, and everything stood revealed. It was enchanting to watch the earliest rays of the sun light up the summits of the snowy Alps, and gradually creep downward, glorifying the meadows. At 3 the birds began to sing, and great and small fish were leaping out of the water just off the shore. At past 3 a man with a harpoon came prowling along seeking some finny prey. One early crow flew across the lake unaccompanied about this time. At a quarter

to a priest trudged manfully along on his way to celebrate early mass in some outlying chapel. Then the Lucerne clocks struck four, and were answered by a sweet jangle of bells coming from some chapel far away to the right of the bay of Alpnach. Very peaceful looked the fishermen's boats gliding over the still lake, or stationary whilst the nets were drawn up. But what was entrancing and truly Christian was the faint tinkling of a dozen of church bells in as many mountain hamlets, summoning the peasants to the one great service of Christendom, the shewing of the Lord's death. I believe I turned in and slept soundly after that.

My father and mother and Archer went up the Rhigi, and saw a glorious sunrise, and they came back raving about it; but I still uphold my sunrise against theirs. My father and Archer also made a little tour, which may have occupied a week, to Interlacken, Thun & c. from which they ~~came back~~ returned more than ever in love with Switzerland.

Archer learnt Italian whilst we were at Lucerne, and learnt it with so great ease as very soon to read off in English, freely translating for our benefit, two of Goldoni's stupid comedies, *La Locandicra* and *Il Burbero benefico*. He even made some way in mastering Dante's great poem; and to this period is due - unless I err - his rendering of *Francesca di Rimini*, which, not being long, I will venture to transcribe here.

*Francesca of Rimini*

*Attempted from the Inferno of Dante*

'The land, where first I hail'd the light of day,
Lies on the ocean, where the Po descends
With all her train of followers: gently play
The zephyrs there, and love sharp arrows sends

To idle hearts. Thus he enamoured grew
Of my poor beauty - now so quickly lost;
And so it pleased him, that his fancy flew
To hail my love; - and still, whate'er it cost,
Even here, my heart is his, his heart is mine!
We lived on earth together; so we died;
But he, our ruthless murderer, shall pine
In the Caina of the Fratricide.'
Thus spoke the sorrowing maid; whilst on the sward
I bent my downcast eyes, and silence kept,
Her grief respecting: - till, at length, the Bard (Virgil)
Exclaim'd, - 'What ponderest thou?' – 'My spirit wept,'
I straight replied, 'to think on their sad fate,
Whom here we view. Alas, what joys were theirs, -
What bliss divine! And now, - all desolate!'
And then I turn'd to where they sat, by cares
And ceaseless woes perplex'd; 'And oh!' I cried,
'Francesca, gentle maid, thy destiny
Hath roused my tears, which now in sadness glide.
Oh tell me, when thy love's first timid sigh
Burst from thy trembling bosom - when desire
First thrill'd thy gentle frame!' – 'Alas' she said,
'There is no grief more great or woe more dire
Than thus recalling days that aye have fled
When we were yet all happy: but if thou
Indeed would'st trace our love's first origin,
Even though remembrance stab my soul, I now
Will all reveal, - and thus my tale begin.
One day we read, within a flowery glade,
Of Launcelot and Love: we sat alone;
And oft to meet, our eyes mid blushes stray'd,

And then again to earth were wildly thrown:
At last, one part we read, so sweet, so true,
It all-entranced us: there, oh there, we fell! -
'Twas where the lover to his mistress flew,
And on her lips enraptured hung! The spell
Was broken; and the youth who sat by me,
His arms around me flung, and kiss'd me too,
All-trembling. - Then was marked our destiny:
That day, we read no more.' - While thus she threw
Across the brain remembrance of the Past,
Her lover wail'd so sorely, that the dearth
Of every home my spirit overcast,
And my heart sicken'd, and I fell to earth.

From *Spring*

Archer felt nature's beauty dearly, but, being short-sighted, he could only take in broad effects. Therefore he has acted wisely in avoiding details when giving expression at any time to his raptures about scenery. Those raptures were real; but, for the reason I have given, descriptive poetry was not his forte. And yet, with this deficiency, how impossible was it not to augur poetical fame for him at that time!

His father was proud of Archer, and so too was his mother. Perhaps they were too proud. And yet our mother was sensible, and did not spoil her eldest son. Our father was above all things critical, and was seriously annoyed at his son's unwillingness to correct and revise what he had once written. But for all that, Archer may have been placed too much on a pinnacle in the family; and this may have led him somewhat to disregard scholarly labour, and to trust too much to genius. Certainly I will not incur the charge 'Thou satest, and spakest against thy brother: yea, and hast

slandered thine own mother's son'; but I trust equally to be preserved from a blind partiality. My brother, then, was not wholly free from vanity; and the chorus of family admiration, in which I bore part, may have implanted in his character the seeds of conceit, destined to form the fly in the ointment. But having said this, I must needs add, because it is the truth, that he could and did on all serious occasions place vanity beneath his feet. Of course, he was bent on carrying the world before him, but unselfishly, and with assured trust in God. He was no monster of perfection; but I am the better able to speak all the truth concerning him, because, take him for all in alI, he was a noble fellow. He was a devourer of books, and no idler; only he would rather think a subject out for himself at any time than get up carefully what other men - considered authorities - had written about it. To do this was a trouble to him, and in spite of great activity of mind, he had a fair share of indolence. And where, as at Lucerne, there was not much to read, he is likely to have been scribbling on his own account when not feasting on the works of two or three master-poets, Shakespeare, Schiller, and Goethe. Our father knew much of Shakespeare by heart. And Archer, whose memory was far less good, loved Shakespeare with a devoted love from boyhood to life's close. Possibly at this time he ought to have been at school, or at all events 'in statu pupillary.' And yet he might so have missed that originality which, whether for good or evil, differentiated him from other men.

The Segessers took us with them on various expeditions among the mountains. The young ladies, Chemist's daughters though they were, were considered not a little aristocratic, and every door flew open to the children of the Landamman and their English friends. Under their bright and merry guidance we were present at remote village festivals, amidst lovely scenery unseen by the stream of English tourists, What flower meadows we crossed! Surely, Swiss daisies and buttercups beat all others. We saw many a spot like to that promised by Browning's *Pied Piper* to the children:

Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,
And flowers put forth a fairer hue
And everything was strange and new.

The Segesser family was a very handsome one; but one or two of the daughters and the only son - a young fellow - were consumptive. Snail broth formed part of their daily diet. The young ladies much entertained our mother - through the medium of French, I suppose, - by telling her that each of the sisters had her own distinct circle of friends. It seems, unless my memory plays me false, that there were at that time at Lucerne as many different circles of friends as there were different birthday years of living men and women. Girls, and if I mistake not boys also, only associated intimately from childhood upwards with girls and boys born in the same year with themselves. Thus, only one sister or brother would be asked to a children's party, and later to a grown-up dance, and not the rest of the family. What a limited choice this arrangement would seem to have left for marriage, since, according to the Laureate, marriage proceeds from *Circumstance*:

'Two children in two neighbour villages,' &c.,

unless indeed the fruit of another year may often have seemed doubly sweet, because forbidden. And would not money-bags carry weight in Switzerland, as elsewhere? Gilbert the witty might find the materials here for a comic libretto; but I could rather wish that, for once, he would write a romantic opera for our delightful Sullivan to compose.

The youngest and prettiest of the Segesser sisters, Josephine, was equally beloved by Dick and me, Dick cutting me out thanks to his high spirits and good looks. ~~I wonder~~ Were he and the young lady possibly cocoal? I

wonder that little Miss Josephine would have anything to say to either of us after our mother, in an unhappy hour, had transfigured us from honest looking English boys into highlanders. She found it difficult to clothe us to her mind on the continent, so, being ill-inspired, she sent an order to England for two highland suits for Dick and me. When ~~they~~ the plaids arrived, ~~the plaids~~ they excited the unrelenting indignation of the Lucerne boys. It was more than they could bear. The boys would mob us on the long covered bridges, those famous bridges with sheltering roofs whereof one was embellished with quaint pictures of the Dance of Death. However, with Archer's potent help, it was possible to keep the bridge (like the three Horatii) against all comers more especially as there were no stones handy.

~~This~~ The mention of stones brings to my mind what might have proved a calamity. We stayed on late enough into the Autumn at the villa Segesser for the walnuts to ripen. They were thick on the trees, and Dick and I went on several marauding expeditions. One day we were bringing down the walnuts with stones, as usual, and for a time all went well. At last Dick topped the hedge at the very moment I was taking aim with an extra-large stone. The stone caught him on the back of the head, and he fell bleeding into my arms. He whispered that it was nothing, and fainted. Thank God, he was soon well again. I caught big perch from the shore of the lake; and a Mr Mahaffy and I went fishing in two boats, with a long line - having dependent hooks - between us, and took large trout in considerable numbers when there was a little breeze on the water. We gave away most of our fish to the neighbouring cottagers, which may account for our not being interfered with.

Whilst at Lucerne we encountered two terrific storms. Only my mother and I were exposed to Storm No. 1 - We two had walked into Lucerne on a shopping expedition on a sultry afternoon, and as usual approached the town by a long covered bridge. On our way home we had only got as far as

the cathedral when the storm burst. It was not one of our gentle English storms, but it was something like a tropical tempest which can kill. Instead of going inside the church, which would have been our safest plan, we took shelter under the cloisters, amidst the metal and stone monuments of the dead. The lightning flashed most wickedly all about us - forked lightning - seeming to be attracted by our metal surroundings, and the thunder bellowed and echoed amidst the near and distant mountains. I doubt not that our lives were in danger. At last we could stand it no longer, so went out into the storm. In an instant we had not a dry thread upon us, for a deluge was falling, and a stream of water met us rushing down the high-road; however, we got home safely. From the villa my father had seen two balls of fire fall into the lake. It was fun getting into bed for half an hour whilst dry things were being prepared; hot coffee and cake were also agreeable.

Storm No. 2 overtook us on the water. The Segessers had given us an entertainment at their other villa on the opposite shore. The feast ended with whortleberry tart and cream. We fished, too, from off their jetty, and I can still see a big pike, a splendid fellow, basking unconcernedly in the sun, quite close in to shore, whom I vainly endeavoured to capture. By and bye, after coffee, a storm seemed brewing, and we were counsel led to make haste and get home. My father was apprehensive of mischief, and gladly consented to Dick's staying behind with our kind entertainers in order, as he said, that the whole family might not be cut off at one stroke. Presently, when we had been rowing for some fifteen minutes, a tremendous wind came down from the mountains, and the boatmen bade us hold on for dear life by the awning, lest the boat should be capsized. I recollect our sister Fanny's nervous laugh, but the rest of us were serious enough. Just when the storm was at its height, a large boat passed us with four rowers, but declined to take us in tow. We made for the shore we had not long left, and felt grateful when we were so fortunate as to push our boat into a creek. I was the first to jump out, but, in so doing, sent the boat out of the creek

once more into the raging lake. However, they soon got her nose in again, and threw me a chain by which I held on with bleeding hands. I hope I have not made too much of the storms. We thought a good deal of them at the time. Presently we walked up through long wet grass to a farm-house, whence we sent to Lucerne for a carriage which conveyed us safely home. At the farm-house they gave us a delicious meal of smoking hot potatoes, salt, buttermilk, and bread.

We stayed on long enough at Lucerne to see Autumnal mornings of densest mist, followed by days of brilliant sunshine, and succeeded again by cold nights. On the Alps we saw much fresh snow, and after sunset we enjoyed the warmth of our stove. It was still so pleasant that we might have lingered at Lucerne a little longer, but for one circumstance. Two or three of us younger ones had a suspicious enlargement of the throat, resembling the first stage of goitre. So we thought it well to be off. Since that time I have seen, on occasion of later visits to Lucerne, one or two of the young ladies of the Segesser family happily married. Consumption did not claim them all for victims. But I believe that pretty Miss Josephine died early; and I am sure that her brother did so. Archer formed some friendships with young Segesser, a fine fellow, a good son and brother, proud of his horse and military accoutrements; and the following lines tell the tale of his fading away.

*An Autumn Record*
*From Life's Springtime*

'O hoary splendours of my own loved mountains!
O golden glories of each autumn eve!
Blue lakes, and torrents bold, and rippling fountains,
And breezes free ye cannot, sure, deceive!
Ye waft me health, ye pledge my restoration;

Already swells my breast: - disease must fail
To conquer such ally, the broad creation:
O, Switzerland beloved! All hail, all hail!'

Thus breathed the youth, from Halle's school returning;
Consumption there with stealthy grasp had won:
He droop'd, and droop'd, until his spirit-yearning
Was stirr'd for home: - he comes, the mountains' son.
Yes, surely, here, where love awaits to cheer him,
Fond father, sisters sweet, death may not gain:
The dreaded tyrant shall not venture near him,
In that close circle, charm'd from doubt or pain.

And now, by Lake Lucerne's pure azure waters,
Calm sojourns he, in hopeful mood of mind.
He smiles to see them pass, the mountains' daughters,
Each with that dear straw hat, which roses bind;
He marks the sun in golden distance setting,
While loved Lucerne gleams white on that green shore,
And, every fear and every care forgetting,
He drinks his own Swiss air, and lives once more.

Alas, alas: - few weeks - ill signs recurring,
Rewake alarms; and up the heights speeds he
To Alpine dwelling, - hope yet inly stirring
That there a slow revival gain'd may be:
Such the last chance for life or love. - There reader,
Was it my hap his pale spare form to view;
That bright blue eye, - too bright - for life quick pleader,
I still recall: I pitied. Pity you!

Right sad it was, ‘midst that fresh life of Nature,
Eternal, undefiled in fadeless youth,
To mark this sere and waning fellow-creature,
Scarce past life’s boyhood, - piteous sight in truth!
Methought those autumn glories passed before him,
Each breathing in its turn faint fond farewell;
Yea, even the happy skies, that brighten’d o’er him,
On him, I deem’d their rays in pity fell.

Me seem’d each zephyr free, the mountains roaming,
Sighed forth, ‘Ah, could I ease thy fatal. Pain!’
The noon-day sunshine, and the even gloaming,
They mourn’d alike; mourn’d too the tinkling strain
From happy herds; the Alpine clarion ringing,
I ween’d, had echoes mournful for his ear;
The gay glad bird in upper air soar’d, singing -
‘Poor boy! poor boy!’ thou may’st not linger here.’

Oh, never, never, autumn holier, brighter
Charm’d mortal senses! – seem’d it then too me
As each thing strove to prove his heart’s delighter,
And bury his soul to immortality!
For him those eves of Iona and Iingering beauty;
For him old Rhigi smiled in broad renown;
That mountain-world performed one sacred duty,
To bless its own true son, and, parting, crown.

With overflowing tenderness it granted
Its treasures all to soothe his last loved days: -
Surely, that world of light was Angel-haunted;
Thus deem’d they, might his latest breath be praise!

So proved it, trust I. Ere that year departed
He slept death's sleep; a faint, pale record mine;
But him the zephyrs wail'd, the merry-hearted,
And mourn'd above his grave the glad sunshine.

Nor void of sentient pity deem those glories.
Of nature dear! God's angels haply guide
And sway them. Mountain herdsmen tell you stories
Might move your wonder. Sceptic, do not chide!
Suck young existence, slowly, sadly, waning
'Midst such glad Switz-world, men's tears might woo:
This record, friends: it fears not your disdaining,-
'Tis simple, as yon mountain skies are blue.

From *Spring*

Do not these lines bear out my assertion that Archer Gurney had a true feeling for nature?

# Chapter X
# Nancy. De Deranger. Victor Hugo.
# 1837-1838

We left Lucerne about the end of October, 1837, when Archer was seventeen years old, after a summer and autumn of unsurpassed splendour, and posted to Nancy, the pretty capital of Lorraine. I remember well the journey, which was not a Iong one, and led us through Basle and Strasburg. A kinsman of our mother, Major Croft, lived at Nancy, whose dahlias were a wonder and a glory. Other English friends, the Gydes, were to winter in what they represented, and not untruly, as one of the handsomest provincial towns in France, and unusually rich in good French society, Nancy being the headquarters of the legitimists. The early winter found us installed in the private house of a French gentleman, a Monsieur de Rogué, which house we had to ourselves. The best rooms were white and gold; and, to my mind, let the fashion in house decorations be what it may, there can be few more pleasing combinations. A Mr and Mrs Hughes, English people, lived in our street, as did some Irish people named Gorman, and we became intimate with both families. Mr Hughes was remarkable for the serenity with which he bore comparative poverty after a short period of extraordinary wealth. If I am right, a fine estate had become his without dispute or question, and he had enjoyed it blamelessly for several years, when, his title ~~to the estate~~ proving a mistaken one, he had readily surrendered the property into other and rightful hands. Miss Gorman sang admirably, and indeed like a great artist: her impassioned rendering, in particular, of ‘Robert, toi que j’aime’, when once heard, was not to be forgotten. Her brothers Ellis and Sam also sang finely. A younger brother, Ferdinand, a good-looking fellow, who was being brought up with a view to becoming a Roman Catholic clergyman, did not make a very hearty playfellow. I believe he eventually ~~married an heiress, and~~ remained a devout layman, and married an heiress.

The Gormans, being Roman Catholics, and resident at Nancy, helped us to be on visiting terms with the ancienne noblesse of the place, who however never admitted us to intimacy. Still it was pleasant for the heads of the family to go to their soirées and balls; and we returned civilities in kind. Delightful manners these great French families possessed. They were more or less poor, but not on that account the less charming. But they inevitably formed a coterie apart, sociably, politically, and religiously. That they tolerated us at all - toleration not being a French virtue - was I think to their credit, and says something for us too.

My father found a good club at Nancy, where Englishmen - several of whom I have not named - played whist, and Frenchmen played écarté, though I doubt not the roles were inverted now and then. The Gydes were our chief friends, a father and two handsome daughters. The engagement of one of these young ladies to a Mr Grey, nephew of Major Croft, was the English event of the winter. My mother also took a warm interest in the birth of a little Hughes next door, she helping to nurse the mother and infant. We were destined to meet the Gydes again in after years, and always with pleasure. One word I should let fall to record our boyish admiration for a Miss Penn, of half French half English extraction, and perfectly lovely. She was barely sixteen, and already engaged to an old French gentleman of large fortune. When she condescended to come to a children's party at our house, we boys thought ourselves honoured indeed. There much that I pass over lightly. The winter proved a severe one, and the wolves came scampering and rampaging almost into Nancy. Somewhat rashly, Mr Hughes and I, armed only with stout sticks, walked through the woods over the frozen snow; but I don't know that we ever so much as came across the trace of a wolf. Archer was a great friend of the younger Miss Gyde, who was an evangelical of the evangelicals, and he sought to wean her from the Narrowness of her ways. Charming as she was, it is a wonder that she did

not make an evangelical of him; but he was tough, she if anything being tougher.

Our tutor, who came daily from 3 to 8 pm, to instruct us in French and Latin and Greek, in arithmetic too, was a Mns Champelberre, a nice old gentleman with as little malice in him as it is possible for a Frenchman to possess. The consequence of this simplicity of character was that he was bullied - or said to be so - at home. His wife and daughters dressed fine, and he dressed shabby. His wife and daughters fared well, and his commons were said to be short. It was our mother's happiness, and ours, to take some dinner daily to him into the study at 5 o'clock, which was the fashionable dinner-hour then in Nancy. And oh, what a lot of persuasion it cost us to make him accept a little soup first, and next some hot plat, and a glass of good wine, on the truthful pretext that it was dangerous to face the extreme cold on an empty stomach. We redoubled our cajoleries to induce Mons. Champelberre to taste something in the way of sweets. I remember his shocking us in the Spring by making light of gooseberry tart! - Whereas we held with Southey that 'gooseberry pie is best', he upheld the heresy that anything else would be as good with plenty of sugar and cream. He taught us French on a Champelberrian method, and we got to know the difficult French grammar passably well. For lack of French boy and girl intimates, we stopped short at this time at the Grammar, and though we read with ease could only express ourselves imperfectly. We did not enter the Roman Catholic churches to hear sermons; and it was a rare event for us, when at Nancy, to go to the Theatre - the French Theatre not being considered so innocent as the German. One delightful melodrama we saw, *Robert Macaire*, and I question if we saw another. We heard an occasional Opera, - *Zampa* to wit,- but these were more pleasant than useful. We took in a French weekly paper; *L'Ami des Enfants*; and in consequence of reading in it harmless and funny extracts from the works of Paul de Cock we discovered that at all events one French author was possessed of a sense of

humour.

Whilst on the subject of reading, I may note that Galigtani's pirated editions of English books were at this time a comfort to us. Tauchnitz, if I mistake not, was to start somewhat later on his piratical career. I have never yet said - what was the fact - that our mother through more practical than literary (of course there is no necessary opposition here) was an intelligent reader of books. She did not affect poetry, but no one's judgement was more to be depended on where the merits of a *Memoir* or novel were concerned. Archer read such works of Victor Hugo as were then published, rendering now and then into English verse anything that caught his fancy. And the classical Racine was no whit less dear to him than the romantic Victor Hugo. He also brought to his father's notice de Beranger's songs - the result being a very happy metrical translation.

Let the following song serve as a specimen.

*You are no more Lizette*

Lizette! And is it you?
You with this fine toilet?
You in those jewels too?
You with a large cigarette?
Ah, no, no, no,
You are no more Lizette:
Ah! no; adieu!
It can't be you.

Your feet in satin sleek,
The green-grass dews will wet;
The flowers that deck your cheek,

Where did you buy? how get?
Ah! no, no, no,
You are no more Lizette:
Ah! no; adieu!
It can't be you.

Your room a scene presents
Of wealth beyond compare.
Your bed's perfumed with scents,
And ~~gilding~~ decked with gilding rare.
Ah! no, no, no, &c.

How changed the season, when
You were my own sweet pet!
And Love's fair queen! oh! Then
You were a mere Grisette.
Ah! no, no, no, &c.

To love you once gave reins,
And men in flames would set.
If ten you held in chains
Still you were no coquette.
Ah! no, no, no, &c.

Now mistress of a Peer,
Who buys your love, you fret,
Yet joy affect - I fear
Your sun will early set.
Ah! no, no, no, &c.

When love first fanned my flame

‘Twas for a sweet Brigette.
Farewell! You’re not the same,
Madame - perhaps Duchess yet!
Ah! no, no, no, &c.

What pains were taken to perfect these renderings: and how many fresh versions my mother had to write out! Each time that she set about a fair copy she was assured that it was the last; and each time the temptation proved irresistible to rewrite it almost from beginning to end. There never could have been a last copy of any one of the Songs but that at length the copyist struck work. I cannot wonder at her patience finally breaking down. This perpetual retouching of what seemed finished was the cause why more than ever Archer rarely altered a single word that he had once written, - a characteristic of his for many years -, though towards life’s close he got the better of it. Another literary work that my father made some progress in, when at Nancy, was a paraphrase of the Psalms of David in blank verse. I fancy he only reached the 50th Psalm; and I honestly think that his good blank verse still left the attempt a failure. There is in my possession, however, a Christmas Hymn of his, dating from Nancy days, which I like so well as to quote.

*Christmas Hymn*

He comes with the swell of the Angels’ song,
He comes with the shout of the Shepherds’ praise,
He comes, the Messiah, the Promised so long,
The God in the man His glory displays.

Hosanna: our Prince, our Saviour, is come,
Whom prophets and kings were anxious to see;
The splendour He leaves of His heavenly home,

To visit the souls that destitute be.

Behold Him, ye blind, in the light He pours:
Leap, leap, to receive Him, ye halt and lame:
Ye captives, burst forth from your prison-doors!
Rejoice, ye deaf, in the sound of His Name:

He comes to illumine the dark in mind,
To free the soul from the bondage of fear,
He comes that the guilty pardon may find,
Hosanna! our Saviour, our Lord, is here.

Archer did not translate any of de Beranger's poems, leaving that field intact for his father; but here is a lyric from *Spring* which was supposed to show the influence of the French 'chargennier.'

*Duke Richelieu to Minon*

Farewell,
Ma Belle!
Ma Belle
Farewell!

You thought that you could grieve me
By striving to deceive me,
And then so lightly leave me,
To seek another's arms:
But go, may heaven protect you!
I ask not to direct you;
'Tis true, I did select you,
But now you've lost your charms.

Farewell,
Ma Belle!
Ma Belle
Farewell!

Your sparkling eyes have pleased me,
And your raven locks have seized me,
And your laughing wiles have teased me,
But all in days of yore:
And now – I do not miss you,
I'll not applaud nor hiss you,
For I love you now no more.

Farewell,
Ma Belle!
Ma Belle
Farewell!

I have said that Archer rendered into English verse any French poems of Victor Hugo's that especially struck him. Let me ~~add one or two~~ give two or three renderings here. They are from 'Les Orientales.' Their length warns me off The *Djins* or *The Danube's Anger*, which otherwise I might select.

*Pirates' Song*

A hundred captive fisher dogs
Across the bounding waves we bore,
And far we sought for Christian girls
To sell on Afric's shore!
Away, away, across the sea!

Seek high, seek low, maids undefiled!
Full eighty rowers bold were we
In our galley wild!

A convent near the shore we mark
Forthwith the anchor down we cast.
We leap on land, and lo! a nun
That lucky moment pass'd.
Close to the waves had slumbered she
Where cast its shades a plaintree mild:
Full eighty rowers bold were we
In our galley wild!

She turned on terror's wings to fly -
'Ha, canst thou dare? Thou child of hell.'
Yes, we do dare, the Captain said,
And we will do, as well.'
Despite each wail and piteous please
The bark received her: fortune smiled:
Full eighty rowers bold were we
In our galley wild!

Still fairer in her sadden'd woe
Her eyes were stars outshone the day:
His Highness gazed, admired, and bought,
And well we made him pay.
In vain she cried 'Death, set me free!'
Sultana now the nun is styled -
In our galley wild!

Here is another.

*The Veil*

*The Sister*
Wherefore thus stern, my brothers dear?
Why downward cast each care-worn brow?
Like midnight lamps that light some bier
Your gleaming eyes are low'ring now.

Your belts are roughly cast aside:
Thrice have I seen, 'neath moonbeams cold
Your poignant - oft so redly dyed,
Half issue from their sheaths of gold.

*The Eldest Brothers*
Was not your Veil this morning backward rolled?

*The Sister*
Dear Brothers from the bath I came,
The bath where green the palm trees rise;
Hid from all glances keen of flame
From Gaiour or Albanian eyes.
In passing near the mosque so fair
Within my palanquin of pride,
I, stifled by the hot South air,
One instant cast its folds aside.

*The Second Brother*
A man was passing then, whose caften green was dyed?

*The Sister*

Yes, - it maybe - but still this face
Uncovered might he never see:
You whisper in this dreary place?
You whisper, and you frown on me?
What? crave you blood? By Allah's truth,
My brothers, nought the man hath seen:
Have pity on a sister's youth!
Think what we all to all have been!

*The Third Brother*
The sun was red as blood, when it sank to rest this een.

*The Sister*
Oh, Pity! pity! - 'Tis in vain:
Four points are buried in my side.
Oh hapless Veil that work'st me pain!
Oh Veil that deck'st death's youthful bride:
My brothers, leave me not alone!
For, O'er my face, my being, thrown,
The Veil of Death its shadow lays.

*The Fourth Brother*
That Veil at least then nevermore shalt raise.

And I will make room for one more 'Orientale' of a more peaceful tune.

*Ecstacy*

In the star-spangled night by the ocean I stood:
Not a cloud in the sky, not a veil on the flood.
My eyes beheld more than reality's clime;

And the words, and the heights, and all nature around,
Seem'd to crave strange revealings, in murmurs profound,
From the heav'n and the ocean sublime.

And the bright, stars of gold in their legions untold
With voices unearthly they deign'd to unfold
As they bow'd the fair coronets placed on each brow;
And the billows of ocean, in fathomless strife,
They cried, whilst their foam seem'd to kindle to life -
'God, God, - He hath breath'd through us now.'

The winter wore pleasantly away with plenty of fuel - wood only - and warm clothing. It must have been a trying time to the poor. My father responded readily to all claims that were brought before him - more especially by the various sisters of charity who came round 'faisant la quete.' When at length winter was supplanted by spring, a happy occasion took some of us to Paris. Miss Gyde was to be married to a Mr Grey at the English Embassy and our father and mother, Richard and I, were to be of the party. Archer was to stay behind to take care of our sister Fanny, and to keep house. We still had with us the same English maid, Maria, whom we had brought originally from England; and she too was to remain at Nancy; to act as nurse to our sister. In Paris we took a handsome apartment in the Rue de Rivoli; and the wedding went forward duly. Then, instead of returning at once to Nancy, we lingered awhile. Paris seemed very beautiful to us, especially at night with its myriads of lamps. The season was the genial spring of 1838.

# Chapter XI
# Paris Episode. The Collége d'Henri Quatre. Nancy again. A sad parting. St Nicholas and A Record from Life. 1838

How the idea precisely arose of sending me to a French school, I know not; but arise it did. I hope I may be pardoned for writing here an episode about the Collége d'Henri Quatre, though my brother Archer was not with me. I have described an English School (Helstone) and a German School (Neuwied); why not, in its turn, say a few words about a French School? The Collége d'Henri Quatre, situated in the Faubourg St. Germain, was at that time in the front rank of French schools; and two of Louis Phillippe's sons were there. My memory goes back vividly to the Spring evening when I became its alumnus.

My father was entertaining at dinner as many as eighteen gentlemen, among whom was the famous old Admiral Sir Sidney Smith, a frequent and honoured guest at our table. The Admiral by the bye, promised me a midshipman's berth, but did not live long enough for me to claim it. Everybody knows how he kept Napoleon out of Acre, and we thought he ought to have been created a peer for that great action. But what people possibly don't know is that he became a prisoner in France at a critical period during the French Revolution, when the Sans Culottes were like enough to have guillotined him. The Admiral wrote some account of his imprisonment in our mother's Album, and I have received command to reproduce it here; so, if there be an episode within an episode, the fault is not mine. This is what the Admiral wrote.

‘5 June 1838

Sir Sidney Smith, on taking his departure from the prison of the tower of the Temple in Paris, where he occupied, under the government of the Directory, during the latter part of the year 1796, the whole of 1797, and the first part of 1798, the appartements (sic!) in which Louis XVI was confined in 1793, wrote on the inside of the prison door for the consolation of his successors, whoever they might be, - and they might well be his persecutors, considering the antecedents and then existing circumstances, immediately after the 18th fructidor, when the Directory prescribed the minority, 90, - the following lines:

Qui a peur du Mal,
a déjå le mal de la peur.
Qui espére le bien
a déjå le bien de l’Esperance.
Adieu mes citoyens

W. Sidney Smith.’

The dear old Admiral’s sentence is somewhat involved, but not on that account the less interesting. With what pleasure I used to see him fight his battle over again by the aid of wineglasses, decanter-stoppers and the dessert!

And now to resume. My mother had already given me a five franc piece, and motherly counsel and kisses, when I entered the dining-room to take leave of my father. At his side sat Sir Sidney Smith, who tipp’d me a Napoleon. My father and his remaining guests followed the old sailor’s lead: and there was I all at once as rich as Croesus! One more tip I received

which involved a little passing embarrassment. Dick followed me to the door of the Citadire, in which, accompanied by my father's valet – I wonder he could be spared! – I was to be driven to the College d'Henri Quatre; and he thrust into my hands at parting a tin of sardines, and a box of splendid fresh butter. On my arrival at the school, which seemed to be in full swing, in full Term-tide, the fellows opened the tin of sardines and ate them; but they turned the box of butter into a foot-ball, and kicked it backwards and forwards across a huge court or play-ground, finally smashing it up.

Personally I was received well enough. I think there were half a dozen of big courts there being perhaps a population of 200 boys allotted to each of them. The very next morning I changed my nineteen Napoleons into several rouleaus of five-franc pieces, and stood treat, as long as the money held out, to all the fellows in my court.

And now to mention the meanest action of my life. There was one English boy in the ~~school~~ College, a Jew, - his name Abrahams. He made up to me at once, and I liked him very much. Presently the big fellows formed a ring and called me into the centre of it. They then informed me that Abrahams had proved a tell-tale and had got his whole class into trouble, for which offence he had been 'sent to Coventry.' And they forbade me to speak to him under penalty of being sent to Coventry too ('evité'?). I argued that he hadn't got me into trouble, and that he was my only compatriot; but they were inexorable. And with shame and sorrow I have to confess - it is a sort of expiation - that I resisted the advances of poor Abrahams, telling him that I dared not be seen speaking with him. I was miserable; and it was a great relief to me when, a few days later, Abrahams, who had written home, was taken away. The sight of him, casting wistful glances at me, cut me to the quick; and I have never ceased to regret that I did not take him by the hand and say, 'We are friends', and take the consequences. How differently would Archer have behaved or even Dick!

Our court had its own tuckshop. I spent my money like a lord, and ought, I think to have been nicknamed Milor; but the name actually bestowed upon me in all good will and amity was ‘petit God-dam’. Seeing that no harm was meant, I answered cheerfully to that name as long as I was at the College - some three months in all at the outside. I neither experienced nor witnessed any bullying; but then we were always under surveillance. It is true that, when bathing in the Seine, in a part of the river that was enclosed, and carefully roped, I have been kept under water on the sly by the bigger fellows. Curiously enough, I saw very little play, unless it were a kind of fives. Rat-hunting was however an institution, and very successful. The fellows, stick in hand, formed a circle round about the caged rat or rats. The vermin, on being let out of the trap would try to bolt through the circle, but mostly got knocked over.

Once in a way an escape was effected. We practised gymnastics under a master several times a week; and I used to see the fellows walking about arm in arm, talking of I know not what. No fellow forced any intimacy with me, but as I have suggested all were civil. I was marched off on a Sunday, with the Protestants big and small, to a desolate Protestant ‘Temple.’ Our uniforms were hideous and a hindrance to free movement.

Once the King, Louis Philippe, sent two hundred fiacres to take us down to Versailles - the palace - where he gave us a good cold dinner and champagne. He caused the palace theatre to be lighted, had the orchestra to play for us, and made us a speech. The King and Court faced us in the pit, whilst we occupied the boxes, and two of the royal footmen held lighted torches at the door of the principal boxes. The Queen Amelie was unwell so did not appear. I felt a spirit of loyalty; not so a little French chap who companioned me. He had sat next me at dinner, when the King had walked smiling round the tables wishing us ‘bon appetit.’ My friend had tucked in

well, but his grace consisted in these words, ‘Je me fiche du roi!.’ On our return to the College we were received by a mob of women - furies rather - at, the College-gates, who threatened to tear us into shreds, whilst they screamed ‘A bas les petits aristocrats!.’ The College Servants, the Easters; and a few gendarmes, protected us. I never once caught sight of the young princes, except indeed at the giving of prizes to be mentioned presently. Unless I err they were the Duc de Montpensie and the Prince de Toinerille, who I suppose lived somewhere apart in the College. To my astonishment, I gained - thanks to Mons. Champelberre - a small form-prize of slight account for French dictation, my competitors being French boys, with the exception of two Greeks. I was not unhappy, getting an exeat one day in every week, which I spent with friends.

Suddenly, I fell ill. The school-fare was good, but peculiar. It was the suppers which did for me on what I conceive to have been days of abstinence - tureens-full of hard-boiled eggs, salad, excellent bread, and a light claret. The next thing was I found myself in the College Infirmary, with two devoted nurses, Soeurs de Charité, and I had a narrow shave. These sisters were all kindness. Now and then one of them would exclaim ‘And to think that this dear little fellow should be lost a tout jamais!’ But they did not otherwise seek to make a convert of me unless some idea of the sort preoccupied them when reading aloud *The Lives of the Saints* by which I was much edified. The elder Sister was apt to be cross to the younger; but when I scolded her privately for this, she bore it like an angel. When slowly recovering, I wished to thank very specially the one who had been kindest - I confess it was the younger and prettier - and being very weak, and consequently rather duller than usual, I could not hit upon the right words. I wanted to say ‘Your kindness touches my heart’; but I knew it was not good French to render this ‘Votre Bonté touche mon couer.’ So I began, ‘Ma soeur’ and she encouraged me, saying ‘Oui, mon petit?.’ Then I began again, ‘Ma soeur, votre bonte’ - but that wouldn’t do; then, with a plunge,

‘Ma soeur, vous me faites mal au Coeur!’ She burst into tears, saying, ‘Quoi, petit infant, je te fais mal au Coeur?’ And I twigged my mistake, and the only thing I could do in my weak state was to cry too; but I pacified her, for she saw that I had meant to say all that was nice.

The Head of the ~~School~~ College, Monsiuer le Directeur, a perfect gentleman, and as I think the King’s Minister of Public Instruction, used to sit day after day by my bedside, and talk most agreeably, only that he would affirm the superiority of France in order to have the fun of hearing me stand up for England. Also my kind Scotch doctor brought me *Quentin Durward*, being my first introduction to Scott – and oh how enchanting! My father, who had returned to Nancy, had cut his knee badly on getting into a carriage, so could not come to me, and my mother was nursing him.

When I was tolerably convalescent, though still very weak - 48 leeches had been applied to me at one time - Monsieur le Directeur, if that was his title, allowed me to sit on a footstool at his knee on occasion of the annual distribution of prizes. It proved too much for me. The Queen of the French was there, not the King, the King’s sister Madame Adelaide, the Duke of Orleans, (killed subsequently by jumping out of his carriage) and the artistic and pretty Princess Clementine. Monsieur le Directeur crowned the prize-winning boys, who then turned and doffed their leafy crowns to the Queen, by way of doing her reverence. The Queen sat directly opposite the Directeur, with only a pathway between them, and therefore close to me. One clever boy who had come up again and again dropped his crown in his confusion at the tremendous applause and the Queen picked it up, and, leaning across, bade me give it to him, should he return. The Princes gained several prizes. Another boy who had gained many prizes, was kissed by the Queen, to the general enthusiasm. My name was read out with a ‘proxime accessit’ and I got a smile from the Directeur. ~~By this~~ I remember no more. By this time the whole place swam round with me, and I fainted dead away

and was carried out. I had a serious relapse, but again got better; and one fine day Sam Gorman being sent by my father from Nancy, came to fetch me home.

It was, if I mistake not, on the birthday of the Count of Paris that I left the College Henri Quatre - never to go back. I heard the cannon firing at the Invalides, by way of rejoicing. Sam Gorman proved a tender nurse, and travelled with me to Nancy in the Coupé of the diligence, which we had to ourselves. My dear soeurs de charité and I never met again, but my mother sent them two beautiful English workboxes, completely fitted up together, with a most graceful letter. How nice it was getting home. But there was a drawback to my happiness. I was ravenous, and was sternly restricted in diet. However, each day began well. A nanny goat was milked at my bedside in the early morning, my allowance being a great beaker of frothy nutty milk.

No one received me more affectionately than Archer, or did more to brighten my remaining weeks of convalescence, though probably Dick and I played more games together. Of course, Archer was much older than me, almost indeed a young man when I was but a boy; and I am apt to forget this broad difference in our youth, because, later on in life, the four years and nine months which divided us became of no account. In middle life I did not look upon him as older, but only as wiser.

At this time a great fortune seemed within the family's reach. It was the period when Asphalt pavement came into notice; and somehow, no doubt for a golden consideration, my father had obtained the concession of laying down the so-called Seyssel asphalt throughout Austria. He received warm congratulations on all sides; and a proposition was made to him to sell his concession to a Company. This he would not consent to do. In order to carry

on operations successfully it was needful that he should go to Vienna; and it would have been only natural for the family to accompany him. But a hindrance arose. Richard was pronounced to have consumptive tendencies, and the Nancy doctors recommended that he should pass the ensuing winter at Pisa. So the family divided, part going to Vienna, part, to Pisa. It was supposed that the separation would only last for a winter.

Here a joke occurs to me, although not altogether a joke, at Archer's expense, and. to the detriment of the family purse. Whilst some of us were away in Paris, Archer had been empowered to make a fresh agreement with our landlord Mons de Rogué - let us say by the month instead of some longer period. Archer had been carefully instructed to have such agreement in black and white. Mons de Rogue, however, was so courteous and gentlemanly about the business that, at his request Archer waived all written agreement: 'Entre gentilshommes cela ne se fait pas.' But alas, when settling time came, Mons de Rogue was ~~as good as his name~~ demurred. His memory, he admitted, was indifferent. He could not call to mind more than a vague talk on the subject. He only asked for a scrap of written agreement to be convinced. As this did not exist -, why, he feared, we must pay for the longer period, which we did.

What to do with our sister Fanny now became a serious question. She was nearly sixteen, well-grown, with pleasing features, and of an affectionate disposition. Her mind remained what it had been, when, as related in Chapter I of this *Memoir*, she had been thrown out of her carriage. It will readily be understood that was one thing to move her about as a child, and another to take her 'en voyage' when almost a young woman. Then our friends the Gormans came to the rescue with a suggestion. They counselled that she should be placed experimentally under the care of the sisterhood of St. Nicholas, not many miles from Nancy. This was done and proved a very great success. She quickly became the pet and plaything of the entire

sisterhood. The frequent ringing of the ~~Convent~~ Chapel-bell, and the frequent times of prayer at the Convent, the chapel itself, the sweet much singing, the dresses of the sisters, all enchanted Fanny. Something of a religious consciousness, which before had slumbered awoke in her. And when, after a month's trial, she returned home, she seemed to miss the bell, the many services, and the kind sisters, though affectionately attached to her mother and the rest of us. I well remember the 'Come, come Mama' which she endeavoured to intimate, whilst falling on her knees, that it was time for devotional exercises to begin. So, at once to her mother's sorrow and relief - she was our pet all round - she went back happily to St. Nicholas. And thus the family was divided into three parts, my father and Archer going to Vienna, my mother Dick and I with Maria the maid going to Pisa, and Fanny remaining at St Nicholas. Before very long - say in two or three months' time - Archer had occasion to retrace his footsteps from Vienna to Nancy. Let the following narrative poem tell the rest.

*A Record from Life*

Are there indeed such mystic intimations
As breathe of coming griefs, and arm the soul,
Ere bursts the tempest? Or, these strange sensations,
Do angels bid them o'er our spirits roll,
Like thunder heard afar? What magical control

Renumb'd my senses, swiftly onward borne
Through thy sad street, 'St Nicholas', where lay
My own sweet sister, - dead, yet not forlorn, -
In her meek innocence? Ah, who may say
Whence came that sudden dread, that vague yet sharp dismay?

I thought her well and happy; on the morrow

Ever from my journey's bourn return would I
Some few fond hours with her to pass: - O sorrow;
She, all the while, a clay-cold corpse lay nigh:
Our horses onward pranced, we flew the village by,

And on to Nancy sped we. With my heart
I reason'd, 'Nay, this fear is silly sooth!
Be calm, be bold! She's well. A coward thou art,
A dreamer, thus to start at shadows! Truth
Shall yield her to thy gaze in innocent gleeful youth,

In angel blessedness. Thou hast travell'd far;
Thy nerves ~~mayhap~~ are are surely worn: shake off this dream!'
I strove: nor wholly fail'd. Light reeds we are,
We poets. Rising, I resumed my theme
With those that journey'd there, beneath the morning's gleam.

And we renew'd our strife, discussing loudly
Of France or England's primacy. We reach
Our bourn at last, and part, each claiming proudly
High conquest prize: - Now tired of jest or speech,
A chamber, not for rest or slumber, I beseech,

But my soil'd travel-robes aside to lay
Ere I my cousin's gateway seek, who dwelt
In Nancy. Meanwhile, secretly, alway,
A burden press'd upon me, and I felt
A shadowy apprehension swathe, and thrill, and melt

My inmost spirit. There in solitude,
The murmur of that under-song again

Swell’d high, swell’d deep. I chid my ghostly mood,
And sought to laugh away my dread. In vain!
At last I knelt in awe, O’er come by that sad strain,

Which sure an angel whisper’d. Yea, my sister,
Thou haply, thou thyself was’t hovering near!
Was it not so? Ye heavenly sprites that kiss’d her
And kissing bare her soul to Eden’s sphere,-
Might she not thus return to warn a brother dear?

Alas, in life, misfortune had bereft thee,
Sweet sister mine, of mind’s benignant sway;
But that sad fall the soul immortal left thee;
And that, unmarr’d by sin, did soon away,
To choir thy Saviour’s praise, and wait the last great day.

But pity, haply pious pity, thou might’st feel for me;
And God might send thee or that mission down
From Eden, lest my soul o’er whelm’d should be,
When on me burst the sad, sad truth, - a frown
To blight God’s sunshine, - lest woe’s ocean-tide should drown.

I knelt, and wept, and chid myself for weeping:
I was a boy, yet were I threefold man
Such tears would shame not:- hotly downward creeping,
They soothed my soul, as such tears only can;
I rose at last, and forth I fared, and all but ran

Though Nancy’s streets; still ever inly saying,
‘This is an idle dream, - all must be well’,
Yet wild to know the worst, without delaying,

I reach'd my cousin's door, How sad the bell
Rang out, - methought a faint, a ghostly passing-knell!

And on that minute, ere the door did ope,
There throng'd a world of fears no thought could measure,
And yet above them all rose eager hope:
'It could not be! This would prove theme for pleasure,
This idle fear of mine, which at my spirits leisure,

I long should smile on!' Oped the gate at last,
A servant; sad his gaze: - with voice that shook,
Yet aim'd at calm glad confidence, I cast
My looks beyond him; but the blood forsook
My cheek, - my heart grew chill, as fades some summer brook, -

'The lady, - the young lady' - this I spoke -
My sister at St. Nicholas', - she's well?
Quite well?' 'You know not!' then the storm-cloud broke -
You know not, sir? She died last week!' O fell
O pitiless word of doom, - that rang dear Fanny's knell!

But I conceived not, half believed not, - still
Ask'd, eager, 'Dead? - Oh, no?'- 'Sir, 'tis too true.'-
Then broke the forced composure of my will -
And I rush'd in - I knew not what to do -
O terrible hour of ill, when earth seems cloven in two!

When all's despair and unavailing madness! –
Prayer only help can bring. – I knelt and cried, -
But why retrace that hour? – True, such heart's sadness,
Now years have borne me onward on their tide,

Hath salutary sway, - ‘Tis well to turn aside.

From life’s hot road, and seek those spots again,
Where sorrow found us; for the willows there
Cast soften’d shade, and even an angel-strain
Breaths from their leaves, that prompts the heart to prayer,
And thus not idly I retrace that hour’s despair.

Not long, despair!- The first wild cry of anguish,
Of mortal weakness, storming heaven’s pure skies
With clamour, past,- I did not, hopeless, languish;
Rather, amidst my spirit’s agonies,
Came holy blissful thoughts of Love which never dies.

God my sweet sister to Himself had taken:
All mental blindness, gone and purged away,
She soar’d to Him! - O, when was one forsaken,
As guileless, and as innocent, as day?
‘With Christ’, I thought, ‘for me she bends this hour to pray.’

Not longer will I linger o’er my ditty:-
Mainly, God’s providential care to trace
In sending some sweet messenger of pity,
Mayhap, my sister, from her happy place,
Did I this tale recount, of grief, yet heav’nly grace.

But in the telling, sacred woe returning
Hath thrill’d my spirit with sweet gratitude;
And now I end, a calm and holy yearning
Would bid me long muse on in cheerful mood, -
The tears which I have shed my life-tree have bedew’d.

There is a grief with gladness blest, right holy. -
Sweet sister mine, thou haply sheltered havened now above,
In Eden, bowed in adoration lowly,
Can’st spare for me below one thought of love, -
For me, for mine, and thine! - Thy funeral-wreath is wove.

From *Spring*

That is a less graceful, but no less loving, funeral-wreath which I am engaged upon in this *Memoir*. Heaven help me to complete it aright! And if I weave in some extraneous branches, make short flights now and again away from my main subject, I surely return to that subject promptly and with renewed ardour. I will not believe that anyone beside myself, however superior, could do exactly the work I am doing, because I alone can speak from within the home circle as to the earlier events in the poet’s life. Only, whilst giving free utterance to affection, I must guard against partiality. As I go forward in my task, I am cheered by several circumstances: by full sympathy with him who has entered on the higher life; by the approval of her - nay, of those, - who loved and loved him best; and by the ever growing conviction that he whose life’s story I am telling was a man of genius as well as a man of God.

# Chapter XII
# Vienna. A lawsuit. Grillparzer
# 1838-1841

For the next two years and a half my brother and I were parted. Vienna was his headquarters, and Pisa mine. So far as I know, to my regret, scarcely a letter of his exists belonging to this period.

First let me tell briefly the fortunes of the Asphalt venture. A foreman from Alsace, able to express himself in some sort of French and German, with two subordinates, followed my father and Archer to Vienna. Old Pierre was well versed in the making of Seyssel asphalt, and did his duty fairly. It was rightly assumed that he would be able to instruct Austrian workmen. Good orders actually came in for the new pavement. The very Palace courts were in part laid down with it. My father, needing ready cash for wages and materials, transferred £3000 from the English funds to a leading Viennese Bank. Without habits of business he seemed likely to prosper. Archer, to the best of his modest business capacity, worked with his father. His knowledge of German could not fail to be of service. Then came a crash. A few days, if not a few hours, after the £3000 had been lodged with the Viennese Bank, the Bank stopped payment. After that everything turned out badly. My father, for want of ready cash, could no longer undertake important contracts on his own account; and no capitalist came forward to help him. Hopes were held out that he would recover a considerable portion of the £3000; but the lawsuit which he instituted as creditor of the Bank dragged on 'in camera' through ~~some three~~ several years, ~~at the least,~~ and he never recovered a penny. This lawsuit it was which detained my father and Archer at Vienna; and I may add, at once, that the delicate state of Richard's lungs detained the rest of us in Italy.

I imagine the long period during which we were parted to have been passed somewhat anxiously by my father and Archer at Vienna, as no doubt their lawsuit had its ups and downs. They were always hoping to join us. Eventually we had to join them. Of course, the mercantile venture which had taken my father to Vienna would hinder him from being accounted 'Hof-fähig', that is, would bar his being presented at the Imperial Court, supposing him to have desired this. He and Archer had, however, some English friends; and what was almost better, they had a few very distinguished and delightful Hungarian friends. These last were amongst the most agreeable people in Europe. Father and son made little excursions in summer. Archer, in particular, visited again and again, for a week or two at a time, a ~~charming~~ pretty spot not very far from Vienna where some kind of cure went forward. Here it was that he was charmed by an old German Musician, whose nearer acquaintance inspired him with the following lines.

*The Old Musician*

Sweet simple soul, so blithe, so kind,
Resign'd to pass from earth unknown,
Whose music, like the wandering wind,
From flower to flower is freely blown
While at thine old and long-tried friend,
Thy deal piano, thou dost sit,
AII springtide fancies round thee blend,
All sunshine glories o'er thee flit.

How freshly flows the pastoral strain
Without an effort woke to life,
As Haydn's self were raised again
To charm our souls from toil or strife!
So sweet, so peaceful, stream thy lays,

Born of that simple heart within;
As pure as morning's earliest rays,
With all that's fresh and true akin.

Ah, not for thee the noisy cheer,
The quick applause from box and stall;
From thee no 'opera' shall appear,
To win ovations loud from all.
How should'st thou stem vain fashion's tide?
How buffet with fate's billows thou?
How face the opera-syren's pride?
How fight thy way to fame? - Ah, how?

No, rest unknown: inglorious, rest:
Still Nature loves thee; still the skies
Pour down, methinks, some influence blest
When soar thy heartfelt melodies:
The very bee that swings without
Hath paused awhile thy lay to hear,
And childhood stills its merry shout,
And creeps to list the 'old man dear.'

Thou hast thy portion: - take our smiles,
Our pleasant tears that land thy song:
Vain strife the source of fame defiles;
No pompous critic thee shall wrong?
The village maid that homeward goes,
Rests by yon stile in peaceful joy,
And murmurs, while thy cadence flows,
'Were he, too, here, - the one dear boy!'

Already silvery locks bedeck
That gentle brow; even mildest years
Will bend the form, will bow the neck;
But still heart-springtide thine appears:
It flashes from each smile of mirth,
Each simple song, so fond, so true
Old friend! if few have prized thy worth,
My Muse at least shall yield thy due.

Years must creep on, and feebler still
Thy steps will tread you garden-way;
But evermore thine eyes shall fill
With happy tears at some sweet lay:
At last, beneath the turf thou'It sleep
While thy pure soul shall heav'nward soar,
And praise, I ween, from Angels reap,
However men despised its lore.

Farewell! thou hast not lived in vain:
Full many a thought thy songs have woke
Of secret gladness, - many a pain
Have dull'd, which ne'er the mourner spoke.
Amidst the chorus loud and deep
Of praise to God a tone, though low,
Right sweet, wast thou! - We will not weep, -
For thou wert blest as few below!

From *Spring*

When my father and Archer arrived in the beautiful Kaiser-Stadt, in the autumn of 1838, Beethoven had been dead but eleven years, and Schubert

ten years; and the musical suffrages of the lively Viennese were divided between the rival merits of Strauss and Lanner. Both were composers of perfect dance music, and had under their direction a well-nigh perfect orchestra. I well remember Strauss in particular, and how his common-place and almost ugly features lighted up and became transfigured when he was playing, say for the first time, some composition of his own. My father ever preserved a youthful mind, and was a capital companion for his eldest son, although he hardly cared - knowing so little German - to accompany Archer to the famous Burg or Castle Theatre, where the acting was admirable, and where Grillparzer's immortal plays were being given.

There I have named a name to conjure with! Franz Grillpartzer (the name is actually spelt Grillparzer, but is pronounced as I have written it) should ever be associated in men's minds with Schiller and Goethe. And so wrote my brother in a German poem of his which has yet to be published, addressed to Geibel in 1881.

Goethen lauscht die ganze Jafel-runde,
Schiller bleibt des Volkes Augenstern;
Nur der Dritte in dem grossen bunde,
Der Grillparzer blieb der Menge fern

(May be translated roughly:

Goethe Lords it o'er the whole round table,
Schiller bides the people's treasured saint;
But the third of those companions able,
Great Grillparzer meets with welcome faint).

My brother will have much to say hereafter in his letters about Grillparzer. But I may mention here that the chief honour which befell him in Vienna

was the making the acquaintance of this great poet, who lived the somewhat solitary life of a shy old bachelor. The frivolous Viennese thought already great things of their illustrious fellow-townsman, though they wounded the poet's spirit deeply, and deprived the world it may be of more than one masterpiece, by damning on its first performance the most enchanting and delightful of all German Comedies, his *Woe to the Liar*. Their subsequent acceptance of the piece and recognition of its many glories could not undo the mischief that was done. This unjust treatment by his own Viennese caused Grillparzer to withdraw from literary labours, as a flower closes its petals in the night. The approval of the Viennese was the more essential to Grillparzer because as yet the rest of Germany neglected and ignored him. Some careless writers for the stage may only be put upon their mettle by having a play of theirs soundly damned; not so Grillparzer, who produced nothing that was not a master-piece. He resented bitterly the dullness of which he was the victim, and then persistently sulked. His organization was too delicate to endure rough treatment. It is characteristic of him that he never went to see any representation of his own dramas, being unable or unwilling to undergo the interference with his ideal which this would have involved. So stolid was the Emperor Francis Joseph that he opposed a proposal of the conscientious manager of the Burg Theatre to pay a double honorarium to Grillparzer in return for a piece of his which had filled to overflowing the theatrical strong-box, - the Emperor affirming that one play was worth as much as another! Grillparzer worked as a clerk in a Government Office in Vienna, much as Charles Lamb had worked at the India House -, only under a more formal regime, and for less pay. To Grillparzer my brother expressed his enthusiastic admiration in fitting terms of profound respect; and the great Austrian poet took the young Englishman to his heart.

To my joy, I have recovered a page or two of torn manuscript by my brother to the following effect.

*A Few Words about Grillparzer*

‘Some thirty years ago, one fine May morning, I found myself with a beating heart on the steps which led to the official residence of Herr Archivarius and Geheim-Rath (privy-councillor) Franz Grillparzer, Austria’s darling poet and the special object of my young idolatry; an idolatry which has been gradually transmuted, let me say at once, into a deep and abiding conviction of his sterling, and in some respects inestimable worth. Grillparzer is a name - pronounced, by the bye, Grillpartzer - not yet familiar it should be to the vast ear of the world, though in Austria he has long been acknowledged as the Monarch of the South German Parnassus, and since his recent death, at the age of 82, has received a more general recognition in Germany, which is partly attributable to the fact that the chief of German publishers, Cotta, has purchased the copyright of all his works and given them to the world in two collective editions within the Iast twelve months, edited by Heinrich Laube, a dramatist himself, and one of Germany’s most noted literary men.

*[Here a page is missing]*

‘All this may account for the enthusiasm with which I was forcing myself on the great and almost inaccessible man who scarcely ever went out, and that without an introduction, not knowing whether he might not bid the young Englishmen make himself scarce, in those official hours, at once. I never felt more awe, more sacred apprehension, than in that hour, but I persisted, and I was rewarded amply. How truly charming was the reception of the young unbidden nobody by the Geheim Rath, words cannot express.

> ‘Grillparzer was rather short than tall, already some fifty years of age, bearing marks of settled grief on his broad and lofty forehead. He was utterly without pretence, simple, natural, easy in his bearing. Tears start to my eyes when I recall that hour. I told him how I loved, how I honored, almost worshipped his great works. And on his part there was no protest, not a suggestion that anybody else could do as well; but what geniality, what kindly candour, what noble simplicity! I told him I had seen his wonderful *Dream a life* a few nights back. Was he not satisfied with the performance? He had not seen it. No? But Löwe (pronounce Lö-ve - two syllables), but Karl Laroche, but Auschütz - these were the principal performers. Then he told me of a weakness of his, so he expressed it; he never could bear to see a performance of one of his own plays. It might be much better, he said, and nobler than his conception, but it was different; and he did not wish his ideal to be disturbed. There was something high-royal about this to my mind then - and is so now. I praised enthusiastically a fragment of a tragedy of his, *Hannibal*, published in a Literary Souvenir of some kind, and begged it might be completed. Alas, he said, when I have once given a fragment to the public it is as good as to say ‘There’s an end, I can’t go on.’

(Cetera desunt)

I cannot imagine Archer to have spent more golden literary moments than when, seated at the feet of the author of *Sappho* he bowed before his genius. If I say of *Sappho*, it is that I may quote four additional lines of Archer’s from his German poem already cited:

> Sappho und Melitta, Licht-Gestalten,
> Iene, die im hohen Wirkungs kreis
> Anmuth strahlte, mit des Geist’s Gewalten,
> Diese, eine Knospe, doc wi weiss!

(Rendered after a fashion:

Sappho and Melitta, maiden flowers,
One who labouring in her sphere of light
Grace united with the soul's great powers,
The other a mere rosebud, but how white!)

and not that *Sappho*, lovely as it is, is greater than *The Golden Fleece*, *The Waves of Love and Ocean*, *Woe to the Liar*, *A Life in a Dream*, or other masterpieces. I can readily conceive how every vestige of self-consciousness would fall off from Archer in that splendid presence. Grillparzer was an accomplished musician as well as a poet, and had done what he could to raise in the public estimation the neglected Schubert by his well-known lines, beginning

Schubert heisz ich, Schubert bin ich,
Und als solchen geb ich mich,

(all me Schubert, Schubert am I,
And as such I give myself,)

expressive of Schubert's blunt honesty and conscious worth. Grillparzer did not compose music, except that he fantasised grandly on the piano without putting the notes on paper. With delight Archer listened to his musical improvisation; with yet greater delight he listened to the Austrian poet's tale about his own dramatic masterpieces. Grillparzer, if I am not mistaken, designed to take an interest in the English boy's poems, and even guided and encouraged him in his choice of subjects. Grillparzer lived to experience an honoured old age, being created a member of the Austrian Upper House of Legislature, and endowed with a sufficient pension, All

Englishmen who love the highest dramatic poetry must yet learn to admire him. Byron wrote as much fifty years ago, apropos of Grillparzer's weird and terrific, yet most poetical tragedy, *The Ancestress* (*Die Ahnfrau*). Nor did Grillparzer write dramas only. His one volume of lyrics, published for the first time in a collective form after his death, contains wonderful things. Witness his famous *Radetzky Song*, which put heart into a nearly despairing nation. Thus it begins in Archer's version.

Up, up, field marshal, and win the fight!
But not for the splendours of glory,
Thou art Austria's hope, thou art Austria's light,
If thou conquer not, here ends her story.

Folly and vanity rest the foes
That have stripp'd us of all our treasures;
But with thee an army to battle goes
That never obedience measures.

Take one more verse:-

Whence thy soldiers come, Prague or Hungary,
What matters when walls call for scaling?
Let German the marshal's battle-cry be,
'Hark forward!' No soul shall be failing.

Archer has translated three plays of Grillparzer, *Woe to the Liar*, of which the cheerful innocent happy ethos greatly attracted him; *Sappho*; and *A life in a Dream*; here let me quote, because its length is manageable, his rendering of

*Introduction to A Life in a Dream*

*A valley in Samarcand. Rocks and trees. Towards the right a cottage. Summer Evening.*
*A horn is heard afar.*
*Mirza comes from the cottage.*

*Mirza*
Hark, the horn, the mountain horn!
Yes, he comes, ‘ tis he, ‘tis Rustan.
But, so late? O, tardy huntsman,
Thou, shalt rue this long delaying,
Hope not smiles or grace from me!
I will chide thy tedious straying,
Frown, and scold, and - pardon thee.

Pardon? Ay, ‘tis that which harms us,
Could we bear, our hearts within,
Firm resolve the crime to punish,
O, the sinner would not sin.
Pardon -, prize of blest amendment,
Not the crime’s reward should be,
Could the righteous Gods decree
That the sinner’s pain should rival
With the pain his sin occasions, -
Were I rude and wild as he,
O, I know, he then were gentler.

But where strays he? Down yon valley,
Toned, methought, the wild woodhorn,
So a form descends the mountain,
With the huntsman spoils encumber’d -

Is it he? The sun in parting
Blinds me with his fiery beams;
Casts, while thus in glory sinking,
Myriad gleams of radiance drinking,
Still a bright and golden ray
On the weary wanderer's way,
Now he turns, he gazes downward!
Rustan? - Poor deceiving heart!
Well the huntsman's form I see,
Down the rocks so lightly bounding,
All his faithful dogs surrounding, -
Huntsman, yes, but 'tis not he.
Bear in silence, wounded spirit,
Bear thy woes in secrecy!

(Seats herself)

Evening smiles, the earth is resting
And the birds from out the branches,
Like to bells of silver tinkling,
Ring the quiet toll of eve,
All prepared, by peaceful slumber,
To obey their own sweet signal.
All things that mild warning follow,
Dews of sleep o'er all are shed;
In the field the flock is resting,
And the flow'ret droops its head,
Neath the moss her blossoms nesting.

From the dark and distant East
So the silent night is rising;

Daylight's rays she slowly quenches,
Spreads her dark and mystic curtain
Round the heads of all her loved ones,
And to rest and peace consigns them.

All is peace. But he can stray
Far from those he loves away;
In the crag's, the forest's night,
He alone can take delight.
And a strange and nameless horror,
Fear, and anguish, rack my breast,

'Tis the huntsman Caleb comes!
So his wife to meet him hastens
With their infant in her arms.
How he onward bounds to hail them!
And the boy, his arms extended,
Lost in joy, the father greets -
Ye are happy, blest, yes, blest!

(Sinks into reverie)

Something of my brother's enthusiasm for Grillparzer has passed into me though I never saw him. He was too shy to accept invitations which would have brought him into a strange family circle; and when I was at Vienna I had no pretext for calling on him. Before I turn from Grillparzer to some less graceful theme, take two or three of his lyrics rendered into English by my brother.

*December Song*

Winter harsh, and keen, and raw,
I thy powers commend;
Compensation's equal law
Proves thee mortal's friend.

True is't that thy frost bereaves
Earth many a prize;
Ice thy gems, and falling leaves
Are thy butterflies.

Raven croaks thy linnet's strain,
All thy pearls are snow,
And upon the frozen pane
Are the flow'rs that blow.

All the visions soft or bold
Maytide scattered wide,
Flutter, shrinking from the cold,
To the chimneyside.

Concentration, best of friends,
Queen of time and fate,
At thy mystic call descends,
Source of all that's great.

Source of art, of nobler song,
Wakes from spellbound rest,
And a myriad blossoms throng,
From the yearning breast.

Her the genuine artist loves

Who reveals the goal;
Nature's winter haply proves
Springtide to the soul.

And next, that you may have a sample, a mere touch, of the poet's power I take this rendering by the same hand of Grillparzer's.

*Paganini, Adagio and Rondo on the string of G.*

What? do men say, thou art no murderer?
No suicide? Why dost thou ope thy breast
And chase her forth, the naked unclothed soul,
And cast her down a portent and a wonder?
Why dost thou stab thy soul, and stab again,
And wail and weep,
And count with fearful sighs her drops of gore?
Why mock'st thou her and mock'st thyself together,
And break'st into a fit of yelling laughter?
Yet should'st not be a murderer, impiously
Thyself, thy frame, thy innermost soul destroying?
And ah! my soul as well!
But safety's found in flight.

Whenever he touches on music, Grillparzer is not least charming. Here is a little gush of song on

*Jenny Lind 1846*

The nightingale they christen thee
No sponsor I, or father;
But, sweet as all thy songs may be,

I'd call thee stockdove rather.

They name thee rose; I, more discreet,
An Alpine roselet blushing,
Where snow and happy springtide meet,
And crystal forms are gushing,

Thou art not colour, but the light
A myriad hues bestowing,
Which where it wings its silvery flight,
Sets all the meadows glowing.

And when they praise thy trills and scales
And grand vocalization,
I hear not much - save judgment fails -
But soul, and soul's creation.

But if Grillparzer is to get grip of my readers then should these see a specimen of this more sombre dramatic powers. So let me quote briefly from a fragment of *The Golden Fleece*, rendered by my brother.

*Part II The Argonauts*

*Act 3 - Part of Scene 2*

Jason and Medea occupy the scene

Jason (in continuation)

One point, alone, is clear to me: 'tis thou,
Although so strange thou seemest. Yes, Medea,

I am a Greek, thou of barbaric blood,
I frank and free, thou fraught with magic wiles,
I, Colchis' foe and thou its monarch's child,
And yet, Medea, yet, -

O list to me.

There is a sweet belief in my far country
That every being by the Gods in heav'n
Has double been created, and then parted.
Each part, they say, is doom'd to seek the other
O'er land and seat and when at last they meet
Their souls commingle and become but one!
Feel'st thou thy heart divided maiden?
Has it been rent in twain within thy breast?
Then, come to me!
But no! she sits in mournful silence.
She gives me no answer to my gentle prayers,
And clasps the dagger in her hand.

Away!

Away with it! (Snatches the dagger from her)

x x x x
x x x x

Still no word, no single word,

Although I see the tempest in thy soul

Shake all its pillars? - Still no word, I say?
(Starting up)
Act as thou wilt then, proud one! Go - be free,
I hold thee back no longer - haste, return
To thine, thy friends, thy race, thy home again,
Back to the wilds, barbarian! Thou art free,

And I detain thee not.

x x x x
x x x x

Kinq Aretes and his son Absyrtus have entered, and Jason has led Medea to her father.

Jason (to Medea)

Fare thee well. My life
Thou twice hast saved: I thank thee for the deed
And ne'er will I forget it. In my home,
When many a year is past, I'll tell the tale
To those I love, and, when they wondering ask,
For whom is yonder glittering tear within
Thy manly eye? In sorrowful remembrance
Will I reply, Medea was her name,
And she was fair, and rich, and beautiful,
But ah, she had no heart.

Aretes
Medea! Speak!
Thy face is wet upon my shoulder. Weepest thou?

Jason
Thou weepest? Let me see those pearly tears,
Let me believe that thou can'st weep indeed,
Look on me once again, for the last time
And in my heart I'll bear that look for ever.
(Takes her hand)

Aretes
What? Dar’st thou touch her hand?

Jason (dropping it)
She does not wish it.
Then, be it so. Thou ne’er again upon
This earth wilt see me. Fare thee well, Medea
For evermore (Going)

Medea (Turning and stretching out her arms)
Jason!

Jason
She spoke? Medea! Come to me!
(seizing her hand) To me!

Aretes
Bold wretch away!

Jason (who wrests her from him)
Dar’st thou, barbarian?
She is mine for ever.

Aretes
Thine? What? Daughter, speak!

Jason (Leading her to the other side)
Come here, Medea. Stay not with yon savage.
Henceforward thou art mine, and mine alone

Aretes

Medea! thou turn'st away? Thou go'st with him?
And thrust'st not thy steel in his impious breast?
Accursed one! Did'st thou perchance desire it?
Give me my daughter, my lured, lost, child!
(Throwinq herself between them)
Father, kill him not! I love him.

Jason
What? Could he rend it from thee, and not I?

x x x x
x x x x

Medea
Father!

Aretes
Thou hast deceived and betrayed me.
Listen. Ne'er more shalt thou cross my threshold.
Cast away shalt thou be as the beast of the desert,
Shalt die among strangers, deserted, alone
Follow thy lover to his distant home
Share his couch, his woes, his infamy,
Live in the strangers' land a stranger,
Derided, upbraided, insulted, despised!
And he, for whom thou partest from father and fatherland,
He too shall hate thee, shall despise thee
When his rage is appeased and his brutal desire.
Then shalt thou stand and wring thy hands
And stretch them out to thy distant country,
Parted by wild and rolling seas,

The waves of which shall murmur forth the curses of thy sire.

Medea (Kneeling)
Father!

Aretes
Away. I know thee not.
Come, my son! Her aspect is pestilence,
Her voice is death to mine ear.
Cling not around my knees, accursed one!
Look at him, him whom thou hast chosen,
To him I bequeath thee,
He will revenge my wrongs, my woes,
And earlier than thou think'st fore

Medea
Father!

Aretes (thrusting her away so that she sinks upon the earth)

Off with thy hands! I know thee not.
Away, my son, my only child!
Away, my son, from her hateful presence!

Jason
Arise, Medea! He is gone. - Arise! (Raises her)

Medea
Jason, - did he speak truly?

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The cuts I had made have been sacrilege. The ~~glorious~~ fine passages omitted are many.

Grillparzer forms Vienna's literary glory. Vienna and Grillparzer belong together even more closely than Vienna and Beethoven, or Vienna and Schubert. My brother's prose homage to Grillparzer will appear hereafter in his *Teuton Forest Echoes*. Let me but quote a sentence or two from it here.

> 'Grillparzer's three greatest masterpieces, *A life in a Dream* (Der Traum ein Leben), *The Waves of Love and Ocean* (Des Meeres und der Liebe Wetten), and *Woe to the Liar* (Weh Dem der lügt), saw the light amidst a conspiracy of silence throughout Germany. Although these three lovely creations, each with a distinctive beauty of its own, surpassed anything that the modern drama had produced since Shakespeare, they were only performed in Vienna, and their author was suffered to live and die without the recognition of Germany at large. xxxx Of his many masterly epigrams, with which Geiber's can be ranked alone (Schiller's and Goethe's are comparatively weak) one may stand here:
>
> You, my friends, of the German land,
> All things must thoroughly understand,
> You pierce through truth both far and wide,
> And come right out on the other side!'
>
> 'To feel the full charm of Grillparzer one should read one of his dramatic masterpieces right through. In my eyes each of these in turn is perfect in form and execution. Hold thine own Euripides, 'most pathetic', 'most tragic' if thou canst, with thy Medea, against the *Golden Fleece*, against the *Medea* of the mighty Austrian bard, whose commingling classical austerity and romantic grace form one enchanting and incomparable whole, unsurpassable, nay

unapproachable, by noblest heathen poet!'

My father and brother lived together in Vienna in great amity and close companionship. In literature they had many tastes in common - both being deep lovers of Shakespeare. My father was however more devoted to Byron's poetry and to Bulwer's prose than was Archer. On one of my father's visits to England he brought back with him a newly published dramatic poem of Browning's, *Strafford*. My father could make nothing of it. The dramatic abruptness of the style troubled him, and he did not even recognise in it any strength. Archer, who in the after time was to prove so great an admirer of Browning, and was to teach others to admire him, agreed with his father as to *Strafford*. Father and son alike condemned it wholly. Browning's style, no doubt, requires an apprenticeship; my brother soon served his time to it – ~~my~~ our father never.

# Chapter XIII
# Pisa. The Baths of Lucca. A Happy Meeting
# 1838-1841

And now away from Vienna to Italy. I will not enter into many particulars; but I must needs say something - with many apologies to my readers - about that other portion of the family with which my lot at this time was cast. We, my mother Richard and I, with Maria the maid, left Nancy at 8 o'clock in the morning in the old travelling chariot, on Saturday the 29th of September 1838, and posted to Marseilles. I get the exact date from an old diary of Dick's. Within a post or two of Marseilles the sunny south burst upon us, and we had our first view of the Mediterranean, and also our first basket of figs - all ripe and bursting. In Marseilles we put up at the hotel de Ia Darce, where the table d'hote was 'a joy forever.' From Marseilles we stepped to Leghorn, the porters at Leghorn who landed the carriage on the quay demanding fifty francs (£2) for this trifling service, and threatening to smash the carriage in case of non-payment. The Commissary of police and our landlord, fearing broken bones, advised us to pay and we compromised for 30 francs. This was our first specimen of Italian roguery, and I also think it was the worst.

On Monday the 15th October we drove from Leghorn to Pisa, a two hours' drive, and put up at the Hotel delle tre Donzelle. The next day we were in an apartment on the sunny side of the Lungarno for the winter. Three winters we spent in Pisa, two Springs at Florence, and two summers in or near the pretty Baths of Lucca - situated among the Appenines. Our education - Richard's and mine - was of the slightest description, a second-rate Italian master giving us instruction in Italian and Latin once in a way for a few months at a time. Dick and I were readers, however, for our own pleasure, and so we escaped being absolute dunces. Pisa was then a great

winter resort for invalids, and for others who loved a mild climate. The forest of the Cascine, a noble forest between Pisa and the sea, was a wonderful place for rides and walks. In this forest many-hurd beetles abounded, and snakes, and deer, and wild boars, and cork trees, and brooks of running water. A good road ran through the forest to the Grand Duke of Tuscany's hunting-lodge, and thence to the sea, which we could reach on foot without difficulty. Our collection of coleoptera (beetles) became enriched by numerous beautiful specimens of our own finding. The worst of it was that Dick's delicate health but rarely allowed him to accompany me into the forest - my usual companions being two tremendous chums and lifelong friends, Matt and Anthony.

There was a decent opera house at Pisa, of which the students nightly filled the pit - Pisa being a University. Friends' opera-boxes were generalIy open to us throughout the winter. La Frezzolini was the principal prima donna. The students raved about her. They would not allow a piece to go forward to the end in the last scene of which she was to meet with a violent death. The hours were early, end the abonnement (season ticket) was reasonable. - Besides the grand theatre, there was at Pisa an open air pay-theatre, [ ], which only closed in the winter. To this Richard and I now and then repaired in spring and autumn. The actors were under cover, not so the audience. The low comedian - a very funny fellow - was the great attraction. The audiences were large and enthusiastic, and the cost a few halfpence only. There were no roughs at Pisa, and we went and came in perfect comfort.

There were - Heaven be praised - English boys at Pisa. I have already named two, M. and A. Woodifield. A third was Jimmy Rewker. The two former in particular were to us as brothers. They belonged to a Durham family. How pretty was their sister! How kind were Mrs Woodifield and their dear old father! ~~How pretty was their sister!~~ How we wished we could

have had our father there too, and Archer. But for a weary while we had to content ourselves with their letters only. Not one of Archer's is preserved; but here is an extract from a letter of my father's, bearing date

Vienna, 27 March 1838.

My dearest Catherine,

I have just received your letter and am truly sorry to find you cannot join me here. Constant anxiety and disappointment was very near giving me the 'coup de grace' the other day. One evening I felt, without knowing why, as if I should die before morning, so I translated Adrian's address to his departing soul, so eloquently but yet so widely translated by Pope, and so villainously done by Bryon, and thought I should like to have my translation put on my tombstone. It was as follows:

Fluttering spirit, fleeting light,
My bosom's guest, companion dear!
Whitheraway in tremulous flight?
To what new world? - What brighter sphere?
Thy fire yet faint and fainter gleams
On this benighted, sinking frame;
And now thy wonted sparks, like dreams,
Are flown, and leave me but, - a name.

My head spun round like a teetotum. Archer sent for a Doctor who bled me just in time, as it appears, to save my life. I am now quite well. The change is wonderful. Phlebotomy for ever, say I! x x x Archer's talents are quite colossal. He made out a case today like a first-rate lawyer, to send into Court. x x x I give you joy of being considered such a bella Signora. Dickey (my love to the dear fellow and also to dear Augustus)

says you are universally admired. I ought to be both proud and jealous!

Your aff. Husband
Richard Gurney

Some readers may not know the original lines of Adrian's address, so I transcribe them here:

Animula! Vagula, blandula,
Hospes comesque corporis
Quae nure abibis in loca -
Pallidula, rigida, nudula,
Nec ut soles, dabis jocos?

Our two summers in or near the Baths of Lucca are never to be forgotten. In the course of the first summer Richard and I took long walks before the heat of the day with an old ~~half-pay~~ officer, Lieutenant Boyd, very generous, but so poor a gentleman on his half-pay, that our mother would have us refuse, when possible, the fruit &c. which he did not fail to press upon us. These walks, coming off before breakfast, knocked us up for the rest of the day, but they were delightful. Lieutnt Boyd it was who introduced us boys to two very different masterpieces, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Pickwick* - the latter then only recently published. He it was also who taught us chess. The scenery at the Baths of Lucca is very pretty, chestnut forests, the Appenines, and a beautifully clear mountain stream, the Serchio, in which we fished and bathed. We had lots of English friends there, and among others the Ewings and Offleys.

Our second Italian summer was spent at Lugliano, partway up a mountain, three quarters of a mile distant from the Baths of Lucca, with a chestnut forest below us. We had a sort of farmhouse to ourselves, belonging to a

wealthy farmer who Iived near at hand. The farmer's younger brother was a Canon of Lucca, and the Canon's garden adjoined our house and was placed at our service. This garden had for central ornament an enormous tree, with a spacious platform among its branches . A very kind man was L'lllustrissimo e Reverendissimo Canonico, Il Signor Francesco Politi; and it delighted him to give Dick and me Latin lessons, whilst he was at Lugliano in villeggiatura. For these lessons he would accept nothing but our thanks. My mother made him promise not to indoctrinate us with Roman doctrine, and he kept his word. How eager the Canon was to fire at the bats of an evening; and how suddenly he would break off to recite his breviary at the vesper hour, and resume his gun a moment after. He never hit a bat to my knowledge. I taught him and a friend chess, One day I came upon the pair at play. 'How are you getting on, Signor Canonico?' – 'Oh, he has taken my Queen and both Castles; but I have taken his King!'

I paid ~~him~~ the canon a visit at his old mother's house in Lucca; and, on being shewn into the long unoccupied handsome guestroom, I was assailed by a mighty army of fleas.

> Then all the fleas in Jewry
> Jumped up and bit like fury.
>
> Thackeray. *The White Squell*.

To take refuge from these I leant on the bed, whilst a servant swabbed them up with a cloth and a pail of water. At a little entertainment given in my honour I met at the Canon's ~~house~~ home most of his brother Canons then in residence; and very pleasant they were. Some of their ways were unlike the ways of our Canons residentiary, but I decline to raise a smile at the expense of those kind old gentlemen.

To go back to Lugliano. Our friends at the Baths of Lucca were fond of coming up to breakfast with us from the valley; and what good breakfasts we gave them! Fruit in a great variety, and a creamy substance wrapped up in fern leaves named ricotta. I have many pleasant reminiscences connected with Lugliano, and its glorious views over the valley, and the mountain stretches above and the prato fiorito - which I forbear to tell. But perhaps I ought to say just a word about the myriads of fireflies which helped to make night lovely. And it might seem cowardice to pass by in silence the dances which took place in a clearing of the forest on the Sunday afternoons. The mothers were there as well as the sons and daughters. A cask of wine was there, but no excess. Innocence and propriety were there. And to crown all, the old village priest sat well pleased among his parishioners.

And now, suppose us back at Pisa for the winter, the second or the third, which you will. Of course we learnt Italian, and read all the best Italian books -, Dante included. We liked Pisa. Now and then I still dream of the Piazza del Gran Duca, and of the State Lotteries that were held there. - Sometimes I dream of running up and down the staircase of the Leaning Tower, or conceive myself frisking about in the beautiful cloisters which surround the Campo Santo, where a sober pace would have been more seemly. Sometimes in my dreams, I enter the noble Cathedral or lovely Baptistry. Or else I pick a bunch of brilliant scarlet anemones in the fields. There is a pastrycook shop too, under the Borgho, whither I betake myself in sleep for one particular kind of cake. Also in visions of the night, I still make favour for a ride with the drivers of a file of camels, used on the Grand Duke’s farm of the Cascine as beasts of burden, when presently I awake from the too much jolting. But above all, I remember in my dreams Dick’s bright companionship, and my frequent distress at having to leave him dull at home on account of his delicate chest when I spent a jolly evening with Woodifields or Offleys or Burtons or Onslows or other pleasant friends. What the first-named friends were to us let the following

entry in Richard's diary show:

> 'Monday 4th May 1840. At nine o' clock I went to see the Woodifields off. They started at halfpast eleven. I am very very sorry. I ran all the way down the street by the side of the carriage, for which I got a good scolding.'

This would be shortly before we spent our pleasant summer at Lugliano. A nice family of the name of Young occupied another floor in our house. The Youngs were a special godsend to Dick, who might rarely face the night-air. There was an English Church at Pisa, a Mr Robbins being the Chaplain; and his Sunday-school was the happy rendez-vous of all the English children. But I am running on, and must pull up.

Richard's lungs seemed stronger; and it was in tearing spirits that we started early in July 1841 for Vienna to join our father and Archer who were still detained there by the detestable lawsuit. We travelled vetturino fashion in our own carriage with the same four capital horses and identical driver all the way. We gave the horses and their driver a good rest on the mainland whilst we spent a couple of days in Venice. Heaven favoured us whilst there with a full moon, and that was luck indeed. The arrival in Vienna, and the long-delayed meeting with our father and Archer shall be told in my brother's verse.

*A Family Picture.*

Three years of long-dilated expectation!
They come from o'er the hills, they come at last:
The more delay, the sweeter consummation;
The goal is nigh, the toilsome desert passed.
Yes, bright Vienna! Though I friends have found

Within, without, thy walls, these dear ones ever
My heart hath sigh'd for; this is 'foreign ground',
And on such ground beloved ones should sever.

Here for a few months we thought to dwell, and then
To join ye in Italia o'er the mountains;
But guile and wrong from evil-hearted men
Detain'd us: still our desert toasted fountains!
Fountains full sweet, whose memory, rainbow-hued,
Shall long refresh the heart. – But, oh! 'tis well
That ye do come, best friends! And blithe the mood
With which we hail ye. - Is there not a spell

In such blest meetings, after years have sped
Of weary absence, - spell, transcending all
Life's noisier joys? What bliss to list their tread!
The echoes of their footsteps in the hall!
Then down to rush, and hail them; clasp them close,
And gaze, and gaze again, unsatisfied!
Whilst their dear eyes, in sadness half jocose,
Through tears and smiles yield greetings long denied!

x x x x x x x

Loved Richard! Brave and free and noblehearted,
And thou, my second brother! Next to me,
More like myself, too; - since we were thus parted,
Ye oft rejoiced your brother I should be!
For ye conceived me - something - wonderful!
Your loving fancies deck my April lays
With summer's glories: now ye think to cull

Fruits from my fancy's garden, flowers and rays!

My mother, too, in life's meridian years,
With that fond smile whose memory oft, ere now,
My school-boy pillow bathed with pleasant tears,
To meet thy 'poet-son', right glad wert Thou!

That voice, of mortal voices, still, methinks
The sweetest, vibrates on mine ear again;
Now swells, and now to softest cadence sinks, -
The forest never own'd a clearer strain.

And thou, my sire! x x x x x
x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x x

But why, why dwell o'er eve so fraught with bliss
In dull cold accents? What is felt is felt;
And words are needless. If my soul owns this,
Why seek such sunshine into gold to melt
And hoard? – Oh, blest be you, who thus return!
Not wholly may I mock your aspirations
For my dim future! May I laurels earn
And gain, some day, a place among the nations,

If not for my sake, yet for yours! Meanwhile,
Of all earth's gifts the dearest - this, be sure, -
Is pure affection. That maternal smile
Which watch'd our cradles, calmly shall endure
Though earth first crown, and then forsake us. - Peace,
Fond song! Why memory's book unclasp to sight?
One prayer I'll breathe, and then this strain shall cease,

‘Rest our hearts one, as one they were, that night!’

How many lyrics and boyish dramas - one I recollect was called *The Adlonite* - Archer read to Richard and me! We prophesying poetic fame. Later, some of these early dramas were of set purpose destroyed by their author; but not all were so destroyed.

*Aldor*, a grand fairy opera in 5 Acts still exists, slight enough doubtless, and very milk for babes in comparison with the strong Grillparzerien meat contained in the last chapter, but it catches perhaps some echoes from fairy land. It was written at Vienna, and is my brother’s first dramatic piece in order of time, apart from childish rubbish. Its charm, if it has a charm, is that it is full of lyrical effects of which I will presently give a few specimens. I may add that it is fuller again of diablerie. Here in brief is the position of affairs. Aldor the youthful King of Albany is betrothed to the Princess Blanche. Udolph, a prince of the blood royal courts both the Princess and the Crown. The Queen of the fairies, Rosabelle, aids and abets the true lovers. The Gnome-King, Zulred, backs the wicked Prince Udolph. The Gnome-King has whisked Aldor away to Gnome-land, and the fairy queen is in despair. Her subject fairies, ignorant as yet that their mistress has cause for grief, ask her,

O, where has thou wander’d over mountain and dell?
Speak, speak, to thy subjects, sweet Queen Rosabelle.
*(Rosabelle advances smiling through her tears).*

*Rosabelle.*
My gentle fairies, would ye know
Where I have wander’d?

*Fairies*

Where sweetest flowr's did blow
And softest streams meandered;
For where thy footsteps stray
The Zepyrs play,
And where our Queen doth go,
The roses blow.
O, where dids't thou wander over mountain and dell?
Speak, speak, to thy subjects, sweet Queen Rosabelle.

Presently the leader of the gnomes persuades the fairy queen to descend to Gnome-land in the hope of rescuing from captivity Alder; and he thus summons a band of gnomes to attend her:

Rise, rise, rise,
From your mountain caves below:
Come where bright summer skies
Cast a mild and genial glow.
Rise, rise, rise,
To the land of summer skies!

*Sprites, low, crooked, and fantastically clad, issue from a crevice in the rock, and group themselves around it.*

*Chorus of Gnomes*
Ha! - ha ha ha! ha, ha, ha! - ha, ha, ha, ha!
Who call'd us hither?
Ha! - ha ha ha: - ha, ha, ha! - ha, ha, ha, ha!
Where mount we? Whither?
Deep in our caverns we guarded the gold;
We brooded o'er diamonds and treasures untold.
For sprites of our mould, heavn's air is too cold.

Who calls us hither?

After a while Rosabelle descends to Gnome-land with the Gnomes , who raise their chant in triumph

*Chorus of Gnomes, resumed*
Ha! - ha ha ha! ha, ha, ha! - ha, ha, ha, ha!
Cautious and wary,
Ha! - ha ha ha! ha, ha, ha! - ha, ha, ha, ha!
Guide we the fairy.

*(From far below)*

Cautious and wary.
Guide we the fairy.

*(The sounds die away in the distance).*

My slight quotations shall not extend beyond one more chorus. The ladies of the Princess Blanche are endeavouring to console their mistress for the loss of the young King Alder.

*Chorus of Ladies.*
O dash those briny tears away!
O calm that mournful mien!
Night cannot quench the orb of day
Or Heav'n doom thee, sweet Queen.
A happy bark shall angels launch
To bear him back, dear Lady Blanche!

*Blanche*

Alder will ne'er return.

*Chorus of Ladies resumed*
O mourn not thus, O weep not so!
There'lt greet him yet again.
Heav'n proves thee by this passing woe:
Why our pray'rs disdain?
E'en now kind Pow'rs the boat may launch
That bears him back, sweet Lady Blanche.

*Blanche motions them to depart. The chorus is heard more faintly from the distance*
Yes, Heav'n, be sure, the bark shall launch
That bears him back, sweet Lady Blanche.

———

That is the kind of thing which to us seemed graceful and lyrical, if childlike, in those early days; and even yet, for me, all charm has not departed. Archer Gurney was to write in the after time any number of Opera libretti, and all pervaded with lyrical impulse and musical feeling, only not high works of art because too fatally unlaboured.

We, Dick and I, formed an enthusiastic, if undiscriminating, audience, and compensated my brother in a measure by our genuine delight for those later cool and disappointing receptions which were to befall his ~~later~~ greater and riper works. As yet, everything in Archer's life was bright and hopeful.

# Chapter XIV
# Vienna in continuation. Archer goes to England. Zacharias Werner.
# 1841-1842

What a gay and sparkling city Vienna did seem to us; and how delightful it was going about with our father and Archer! This last left us only too soon for England, in order that he may enter upon his law studies. He was at this time a good looking fellow of twenty-one. There is a likeness of him as a very young man which hits him off well enough (see frontispiece!).

My father thought Vienna too hot for us in the summer so he took a small furnished house near the Emperor's country palace of Schönbrunn, and thither we removed for the hot weather, only a few miles out of Vienna. Archer left for England just before we went to Schönbrunn, or rather to ~~Hietzing~~ to St Teich near Schönbrunn. My father's strong desire was that his eldest son - should go to the bar -, the profession of a barrister being that for which he had some natural aptitude as a ready speaker and clear thinker. I am certain as to my dates here. Archer Gurney went to England towards the end of August 1841, as the following affectionate letter to his old Aunt Miss Pigou will prove.

London
6 Manchester Street
Gray's Inn Road
31 August 1841.

My dear dear Aunt

I am in London, and trust in a few weeks to be at Dartmouth and to see

you once again. Oh how very very happy I shall be to see you again my own dear Aunt - and to assure you that I never never can forget your great kindness to me. But I will say no more of this now; when we meet we will talk over old times together. I still have great hopes of making a reputation as an author; you will remember that from my very earliest childhood. I was eternally stringing rhymes together. I wrote an article in support of the Church which I sent to the *Standard* the other day - a paper in which 6 articles of mine have already been inserted. This however has not yet appeared in print. You must know, my dearest Aunt, that I (like yourself I believe) am a very stanch defender of the Church. I have been abroad for many years and have seen various Sects there - but not one of them was equal to our Church. It appears that good principles are now likely to triumph, for a Conservative Administration has come in. I have not heard from my father and mother at Vienna for upwards of 10 days; when they last wrote they and Augustus and Richard were quite well; You have no idea how much the boys are grown; Augustus is already much taller than I am, and Richard about as tall. Of course you already know that they and my mother all came to Vienna in the beginning of the month of July, and there they still are with my father. My passage from Antwerp to London was a very favorable one. I shall now conclude my letter, my dearest Aunt, but I shall write to you again very soon before I leave London for Dartmouth. I am sure you will look forward with as great pleasure as I do to our meeting. How I wish that I could see you and kiss you this moment my dear dear Aunt! Ever believe me,

Your most affectionate Nephew,

Archer.

---

I think Miss Pigou died not long after this, but not before she and her favourite nephew had met.

It is a thousand pities that Archer Gurney was not sent to Oxford or Cambridge. He needed to be brought into touch with young Englishmen, of whom as yet he had seen so few. It was desirable also that he should measure himself against others, and find out where he was inferior to them as well as where he was their superior. His younger brother (myself) was sent to Oxford in due time; and why should not he have been sent there? The conjectural ~~reason~~ answer is that having no strong desire for a course of University studies, he himself objected to a University career. His knowledge of Latin and Greek, though respectable, was not such as would have gained for him an open Scholarship and his lameness would have cut him off from athletic joys. He was a great reader, though far from omnivorous, having little patience for what was not excellent of its kind, and a hard thinker, but his education had been of a desultory and eclectic character. If I am not mistaken, pride was the real hindrance. To have been an undistinguished member of the University of Oxford would have been distasteful to him; and the prospect of a three years abidance in statu pupillari had for him little charm. Would that our father had insisted! For if my brother had bent his mind to the studies of the place, he would have learnt many things at Oxford, and could not have remained wholly undistinguished. But it was not to be. So then to London he went in the summer of 1841 with high hopes and generous aspirations; and there he soon joined a Debating Society (The Union) in which no doubt he spoke well. In London he fell in with young men of a literary and artistic turn who suited him, and studied law, and wrote for the papers, and was happy after his own fashion.

He published (with Messrs Senior) in monthly Nos. a translation of *Faust*, *Part Second*, retaining the original metres, and as a rule not beginning to work at the fresh No. till half the month was over. He was a man in thought, a child in experience, and as innocent of evil as it was easy to be. Our father

felt assured that fame in literature, if not at the bar, awaited his eldest son, and he was not a bad judge. My brother's own inclination, in accordance with a strong vein of devotion, ~~had~~ disposed him to take holy orders; and but for the inclination being at this time thwarted, he must infallibly have gone to Oxford; but he yielded filially, in the matter of a profession, to his father's wishes, and consoled himself with the reflection that Church laymen are not without their sphere of usefulness.

Archer has not written any farewell of his own to Vienna, and it may not be unsuitable if I introduce here the farewell which his friend Grillparzer addressed to the Kaiser Stadt, when starting as I think on his Italian journey. The translation is my brother's.

*Farewell to Vienna*

Awhile farewell, imperial gem
Of cities, liveliest, brightest!
What charms! – Yet tired of thee, and them,
Thou scarcely me delightest.

Vienna, beautiful, but fraught
With wiles no tongue can number
Too oft they summer-breath has wrought
A Capua's nerveless slumber.

Soft are the seeds around thee spread,
And calm the river flowing;
And languish airs Elysium shed,
And skies are mildly glowing.

And music far and wide awakes

As in her own dominions.
No need for speech, even thought forsakes
And memory weaves her pinions.

A pleasant race, that knows the time,
And healthy sense possesses,
And reason weaves with song and rhyme,
And heeds not thought's distresses.

Here life seems nearly poetry,
Which proves art greatest danger,
For nearly never quite may be,
And effort rests a stranger.

To live, to breathe, the tranquil charm
Preoccupies existence;
Expression's labour might alarm,
And therefore keeps its distance.

The tablet and the canvas rest
Right virginal for ever.
Muse, may the traveller, prove more blest
In active art's endeavour!

From *Teuton Forest Echoes*.

Archer's comment on these lines runs thus:

'This little poem gives a lively picture of the friendly and winning aspect of Vienna, and the happy geniality of its inhabitants. Many of us may be acquainted with Tennyson's tribute to Vienna in his wonderful

*In Memoriam*. This is of a lighter, and perhaps I might say a less pretentious order, for Grillparzer possesses in a higher sense than Tennyson the art of concealing art, and of writing without the slightest effort or strain, always seeming to reserve far more force than he displays.'

The conveyancer in London with whom Archer read for the bar was an old friend ~~of our family~~, a Mr Stevenson; and, if you please, we will leave him working away at his law-books by day, and diligently frequenting the Theatres by night, and return to the family at Vienna.

So then, we, the rest of the family, spent the summer of 1841 near Vienna, close to the Schönbrunn, the Emperor's summer palace. My father amused himself with his lawsuit, which, to the very last, had some interest for him. Still more did he amuse himself with a wooden pavement of his own invention. He even took out a patent for this, and I believe it to have been very ingenious. Experiments were made on bars of soap, because these were easily sliced up. Fine perquisites in the shape of soap Jacques our manservant must have received, carrying home a noble supply daily to wife and children!

Whilst we were living near Schönbrunn my mother was happily instrumental in saving the life of neighbour's child. We used to see playing about a beautiful little boy the only child of a Chemist and his wife. One day we heard that the child was dying, and my mother went to make enquiry. Little Willibald was crying out 'O weh, O weh', and the parents were in despair. What ailed the child was a stoppage, besides high fever, and the Doctors had given him up. German Doctors were of small account in our day. They were so learned, and saw invariably so many pros and cons, that they rarely acted with decision. The irregular practitioner, not without some inward tremors, as fearing lest she should be accounted a

murderess if things went wrong, administered calomel in some shape truly a British remedy, and recovering set in rapidly. After his Willibald's parents almost worshipped the gracious 'English lady', and used to arrive Sundays with bonbon offerings, and with Willibald civil'd and smiling.

That summer near Schöhbrunn - a splendid one - was dull, and formed a woeful contrast to the joys of Lugliano and the Baths of Lucca. We walked often in the extensive palace gardens and once in a way we met the Emperor. That was exciting for the moment, but scarcely satisfying. Pleasanter was a wild common near our house. I had Dick, and Dick had me; otherwise ennui might have made an end of us. Our only playfellows was Gipsy, a red and white Blenheim spaniel. The fields were over-run with mice, and it was fun to see Gipsy invariably fail to catch them.

What a difference between our way of spending that summer, and the happy manner in which my sons and daughters spend their midsummer holidays at a Herefordshire Rectory! Dogcart and bicycle by way of conveyance; young and old friends in all directions; home and neighbour's tennis courts; cricket matches far and near, and a good parish team; the river *T*em*e* in which to angle (here comes a son, his Uncle's namesake, with a basket of grayling! - no, he has made a poor catch!); a parish choir to sing with; a venerable church in which to worship; pleasant books to read, and some portion of the forenoon to be devoted to study; home music in plenty; and father and mother to plague all!

We were not sorry when, together with the cold autumn nights, came the time for going into winter quarters in Vienna.

To this period belongs *a letter from his mother to Archer*, in manifest answer to a jeremiad which had come to hand from him.

November 1841
Alten Fleisch-markt.
Vienna.

‘I must hope, my dearest boy, that your epistle was influenced rather by the gloom of a November day in London than by any serious and confirmed feeling of melancholy and discontent; if the latter is the case, my dear Archer, I should blame you much and give you less credit for good sense than I have ever hitherto done. You are lame it is true, but I do assure you that your lameness does not disfigure you in the way you imagine; on the contrary, I have no doubt that it gives you an interest in the eyes of many, particularly of the fair sex: You have a most intellectual and expressive face, and although your features may not be regular you are, when pleased and animated, quite handsome. On the score of personal appearance I therefore consider you have no right to complain; nor do I think there would be the slightest objection to your dancing quadrilles which would prevent your feeling lost in a ballroom - you know no one does much more than walk. I don’t know why you should say you are not agreeable in society. I think your manners very gentlemanly and agreeable:- the only objection to be made is that perhaps you are rather too fond of argument. Of course you find your powers of conversation thrown away upon most people, but the wisest plan is to take the world as you find it. Then with regard to your literary talents – you have not been 3 months in London, you have only published a few things in Magazines, and yet you are quite dis-satisfied not to be already known as an author. Why, my dear Archer, you are unreasonable indeed! In the first place the walk you have chosen is the most difficult of success in the world, because those who write for the theatres are generally either actors themselves or in some way connected with the theatre; had it been otherwise I am sure *The Maid of Prague* (*The Maid of Prague*, a play of my father’s (as I conceive, the

play of his own on which my brother built his hopes at this time was *Octavio* - written in graceful prose in spite of the long residence abroad) would have been accepted; but never fear, your genius will yet make its way; but we must have time and patience. And instead of now being out of heart, if you are not further advanced at the end of three years my hopes will be as good as ever. Employ your leisure in improving your style which, at your early age and with long residence on the Continent, is naturally unequal and deficient at times in finish. Clever as are your present productions, I will answer for it, ten years hence you will look upon them with contempt - I speak of your poetry and novels - but I repeat, your talents I feel convinced will yet be known and appreciated. Though you seem to think your brothers more fortunate than yourself, I know that either of them would gladly change places with you to possess your abilities. You are now about to apply strictly to the study of the Law, and with your active mind to which work is but play this occupation will I am sure prove interesting. Let me have a more cheerful letter from my dear Archer, and tell me if what I say is not reasonable. Still speak to me if your real feelings – and hide nothing from your mother who is always your warmest, most anxious, and affectionate friend.
C.H.G.'

A *postscript from his father* ran thus:

'My ever dear Archer. I perfectly agree in all your mother had said about your person, and am more sorry than I can express at the wrong notions that you entertain on the subject. I have more pride in you and your fine talents and beautiful mind than I should have in the most superior figures of a dozen children with commonplace minds. I love you as the apple of my eye.
Your ever most affectionate Father,

R. Gurney.’

———

The above wise and tender communications would probably go far towards removing any morbid feelings of the youthful poet, who felt his lameness keenly.

Now for a few Viennese reminiscences; and if these are not directly concerned with my brother, yet let me plead that in truth they belong to his Austrian surroundings. My father’s objection to his sons learning an instrument having died out, I was allowed to learn the flute; and my master being prima flauto at the Opera-house, he would now and then take me with him into the roomy orchestra, concealed in which I heard some famous operas. Of the winter-sights in Vienna the one which most struck Richard and me was the game-market. Therein was exposed in one centre all the game that reached Vienna; and once in a way we would be exhibited a dead wolf for show, as a sort of advertisement to the pheasants and hares. These last cost but one shilling apiece. The ramparts, levelled since then, served us for a daily constitutional; and there we used to meet the Emperor walking with one of his equerries, and followed by a couple of servants, - as little molested as ourselves by troublesome attention.

Among our intimate acquaintances were a Colonel Fulmar (let us say), an Englishmen, and an eccentric but bright and amusing old Irish lady, the Countess Talbot. There is no faintest reason why her name should be with-held. She was an old maid, and her English name was the Honble Miss Talbot, a daughter of Lord Talbot de Malahide, but she had accepted the Austrian title of Countess for convenience’ sake. In dress and appearance she was like an old beggar. She wore a dirty cotton gown much mended, a shabby old shawl, and a flaxen wig surmounted by a bonnet in character with the rest of her attire. The bonnet was replaced indoors by an

indescribable turban. Her Court dress, which we were often privileged to see, though silken, or of satin, was not much better. She was a little fair old woman, and must have been pretty in her youth. Her manners and voice were masculine; but withal she was chatty and agreeable and very good natured, never speaking ill of anyone, and in spite of her peculiarities a thorough gentlewoman. The Countess Talbot was compelled by unkind fortune to be economical; and we were told that the Empress, with whom the old lady was a favourite, and who was aware of her circumstances, had given special directions that the fortifying bouillon, which formed the parting refreshment at the Court parties, should be invariably pressed upon her. The Countess was a devout Roman Catholic, and Chanvinesse of some noble Sisterhood, but full of her fun.

Colonel Fulmar and the Countess Talbot were our constant guests; and the former, in particular, may be said to have dined daily at my father's table. As he was not amusing, I think my father's hospitality was in his case the more commendable. The Colonel's history was a dismal one. He was a man of fashion, and was married to a very great lady; nevertheless (see *Redgauntlet*) 'it may be doubted whether the Colonel was anything more than an ass.' What he had done was this. He had laid fearful odds against an outsider for the Derby. He stood to win a poor little £500 -, to lose, £30,000. The outsider came in winner. The Colonel then borrowed from the Jews £90,000, actually receiving only enough to pay them £30,000, and so was left penniless. His wife's friends settled a couple of hundred a year on him, paid quarterly, on condition that he remained in Vienna; and his wife went back to her family. The Colonel was convinced that all this had befallen him for his sins -, holding that poverty was a sign of Heaven's disfavour. There was no arguing him out of this. Having hinted that the Colonel was not wise, I am a little ashamed to mention that he was an enthusiastic admirer of one of my brother's boyish poems, but so it was. The poem in question is *Heaven and Earth*, Part II, in *Spring*.

I was so preoccupied with Grillparzer in the last chapter but one that I found no place for naming another poet who spent a portion of his life in Vienna, I mean Zacharias Werner. When we joined Archer in Vienna he had just rendered (such is my impression) into English Werner's masterpiece, *The Templars in Cyprus*; and my father held this dramatic poem in high esteem. Thus does Archer write of its author:

> 'Werner, a man of singular genius, at first immoral in his habits, and always lacking culture. He died as so roman-catholic priest and revivalist preacher at Vienna. His Song of the Vale (the general title) is a wonderful dramatic poem, especially the first half of it, The *Templars in Cyprus*. There is in him a vein of genuine humour rarely granted to the German Muse.'

I cannot forbear from making a quotation. In fewest words let me explain what may need explanation.

The Seneschal of Poitou has sent his son Francio, a fop, but with much of latent nobility, as bearer of a letter to his old and tried comrade, Molay, Grand Master of the Temple. Molay assigns some slight task to the youth, and so contrives to be left alone for a brief space.

*The Templars in Cyprus*

*Act I. Part of Scene II*

*Molay (Alone)*
What writes my end of youth, my old companion?
*(Reads)*
'God greet thee, Bernhard. Take this son of mine.
He is not bad, but wiser than his father,

A lady's man, a sage, a deep professor,
In short, a fool. Thou art a man. Make him one
With or without the Cross! – Thy brother, Henry.'

I recognise thee here, thou open soul,
Hard as thy sword and sparing of thy words,
But full of force and strength. The crippled century
Bears nought but prattlers, and not one man like three.
'Tis such a fellow thou? Ay, ay, I marked it,
With jingling jacket and pathetic tone.
Thou art right, old comrade: he must see his folly,
Must know, must feel, that he is less than nought
Before he can be somewhat. He would be
A Templar too? O, yes, the bloodred cross
Has many another of the selfsame-kidney;
But he is Henry's son, my old friend's son,
And therefore must become a man or nothing.
But he returns. Hush. Hush, my throbbing heart!
Let not the memory of the past again
O'er throw thy balance! Thou I feel for him,
He now must see the Master, not the friend.

*(Francis re-enters)*

*Francis*
The horses drink, and bravely too; the tartar
Has sprinkled all my vest and jerkin.

*Molay*
Good.

I crave forgiveness in his place, and thank you

For all your trouble. Seat yourself beside me,
Here on the ground. My hose of buffalo
Are used to earth, and yours must learn to bear it.

*(Seats himself on the ground. Francis rather unwillingly does the same.)*

Now, look me in the eyes, for until now
I have not half regarded you. ‘Tis true,
You are a handsome boy: the father’s eye,
His golden hair, but he was knit more closely.
If I am not deceived, you yet may be
A worthy man.

*Francis*
‘Tis your great soul which views me
In the reflected light of its own greatness.

*Molay*
No phrases chiId. I am not fond of greatness.
It takes the room which should be held by duty
Worthless and yet presuming. Where’s thy beard?
Thou hast nought but stubbles yet, me seems. Well, well,
Thou wast a precious bantam ‘midst the ladies?

*Francis*
The Countess of Provence, at least, has oft
Assured me of the smiling grace and favour.

*Molay*
For shame! Who asked for names? - Have you perchance

Already tried your skill in feats of arms?

*Francis*
At the court of Burgundy, from whence I come,
Full many a lance with honour have I broken.
The Duke himself was cast to earth by me.

*Molay*
Your Dukes are seldom warriors. Well, what more?
Have you learn'd naught but kissing and caressing?

*Francis*
At the school of arts and sciences at Rheims
I drank from Helicon and made my studies:
And though nine times I publicly disputed,
Fortune aided me in every contest.

*Molay*
*(Springing up impatiently, whereupon Francis also rises).*

Peace, peace, for heavn's sake! What can such a man,
What can he learn in all the universe?
What can he want to learn, he who knows all things?
Say, my young friend, what would you in our order?
By ladies you were highly prized and favored;
Here you must swear eternal chastity.
You were a hero in the tournament;
Here you will find no field for festive lances.
You bear a jingling coat and tinkling shoes;
My old prunello is my fete day garment.
Professors fell before your sparkling wit;

We strike at nought but Saracens and foemen.
You are a master of the gentle arts,
And here the utmost that we learn is manhood.
Return to Rheims, its dances and its dames.
What would you here ‘midst poor unlearned Templars?

*Francis*
You make me blush with shame!

*Molay*
That’s something gained.

From *Teuton Forest Echoes*

---

May this short extract suffice to show the quality of the poem? All is noble throughout, and delightful. And to me it seems that although, in translating, my brother takes the first word that comes, it is mostly the best word. He had rendered into English with enthusiasm the whole of *The Templars in Cyprus*. Shall Cyprus be ours, and we not know its most glorious legend? Surely this work ought to be published some day.

# Chapter XV
# A little more about Vienna. Betty Paoli. Faust, Part II - En Route.
# 1842

After setting forth in some sort Archer Gurney's homage to Grillparzer and Werner, I ought to make mention of a poetess who was among his foremost friends at Vienna: I mean the lady whose nom de plume was and is Betty Paoli. Of her my brother writes, 'Unquestionably the first of all Germany's poetesses. Perhaps she has not the sustained power of Mrs Browning, but she is a modern Sappho, to whom no country has produced a precise parallel.' I proceed to quote a slight specimen of her powers, which was a favorite with her friendly critic:

Would'st thou behold a heart's most piercing anguish,
O; Gaze on mine!
When did a spirit thus in darkness languish?
Thus sadly pine?
Yet when the wildest storms around are foaming,
I arise on high,
And feel, still onward, boldly onward, roaming,
How strong am I!

But lo! What strange, what weighty chains have bound me,
Have grasp'd me now:
To all the lightning rays that glared around me,
I bared my brow.
But when by thy dear lips those words were spoken
'For thee I die'
I sank to earth, the haughty spell was broken -

How wrath am I!

From *Teuton Forest Echoes*

Here is a letter from the lady to my brother, on occasion of her sending him a version of several of his lyrics.

‘Dear Sir

I greet you in English because our German titular flourishes are really too absurd.
Relying on your assurance, I send you the promised translation of your poems. I should be uncommonly pleased if this could afford you any degree of satisfaction, but I scarcely hope this since I am quite unpractised in translation, so that any success must be set down to chance and not to me. Except these poems of yours, I have but translated one Polish Song in all my life; and I am far from possessing that adaptability and facility which I gladly recognise in your talent. These introductory excuses shall be stretched out no further. If a thing is good it speaks for itself, and if bad let it descend to Orcus without fuss.

Together with the poems you will receive my Study on Faust and Manfred. You already know the gist of the matter from my lips, and the rest is little more than a filling up of what I said. You love and admire Manfred as much as I do, though may God preserve you from finding like me in this gloomy portrait your only friend and bosom’s confidant. In any case I hope that your partiality for Byron will cause you to give an indulgent reception to those pages.

I am hindered by my ‘detestable état de femme’ from seeing you at

home, but I look forward with pleasure to a speedy meeting at Madam de W's.
Yours with sincere esteem.

B.P.
15 Febry 1841
No. 23 Rothe Thurmstrasze.'

———

What the poems were which the modern Sappho rendered into German I am unable to state with certainty. As I think, the following lyrics from *Spring* was among them.

*Song of Triumph. (For Music)*

Plait we the chaplet, O: plait we the wreath,
With the roses above, and the lilies beneath:
With the last's virgin tint, and the first's purple stain,
We'll smile for the living, and mourn for the slain.

They fell, they fell, in the hour of fight,
With their deadly foes around them:
They died for their homes in the pale moon-light, And there on yon heath we found them.

The stars had cut the chains aside
Which the sun had twined in his hour of pride,
And the moon gleam'd forth through the pearly wave,
And sadly gazed on the bright and brave.
But let us not weep for the nobly slain:
They shall rise in our hearts, in our souls, again.

But hail we the loved ones,
Who homeward returning,
Are hasting to greet us,
Now sighing, now burning:
Lo, redden'd with gore,
Though erst whiter than snow,
Are the banners they tore
From the insolent foe.

Then plait we the chaplet, O! plait we the wreath,
With the roses above and the lilies beneath:
With the last's virgin tint, and the first's purple stain,
We'll smile for the living, and mourn for the slain.

The following lyric, also from *Spring*, was another of the poems rendered by Betty Paoli -, at least such is my impression.

*Northern Love-Song*

Maiden, sigh for thee:
Turn not away!
Thou art my destiny,
Light of my day.
Colder than wastes of snow,
Lies this heart lost in woe;
Sunk in night, faint and low,
Shunn'd by Hope's ray.

O let thine eyes of blue,
Beam on my soul!

Maiden, for life I sue:
Thou art life's goal.
And if thou heed me not,
Lost is my earthly lot,
Joy and hope all forgot,
Sadness my dole.

See, on our darkest skies,
Heaven's torches flare!
Must still thy gentle eyes
Teach me despair?
Vainly I upward glance:
Aye In cold winter's trance
Sleeps thy sweet countenance:
Spring dawns not there!

One more lyric let me give of which I possess Betty Paoli's German version.

*The Resolve*

Thou art too fair:
I must not dare.
To gaze on eyes of thine;
Or mine would drink
Their light and sink
In that ocean all divine.

Far, far above
My hopeless love,
Thou soar'st in thy degree;

To gaze from far
On the bright cold star
May seem too much for me!

And look not now
On this fever'd brow,
Or madness will tempt my brain:
Wild hopes arise,
Neath those sweet eyes
We ne'er must meet again!

When far I roam
On the salt sea foam,
One thought shall cheer my breast,
That word of mine,
Nor look nor sign
Hath striven to mar thy rest.

Yet, maid most dear,
Let no sad tear
One shade on thy beauty set;
Or my lips will fire
With fond desire,
And swear that I love thee yet!

Betty Paoli appears to have written almost as well in French as in German - witness the graceful lines in which she bade adieu to the young English poet.

*Feuillet d'Album*

Si ton ance agitée
Je fait chercher ailleurs
Mellleure destinée
Jours exempts de douleur,
Vers ou ton désir tende
En tout temps, en tout lieu,
Mon coeur te recommande
A la garde de Dieu!
Pour' que nulle tempete
Ne tasse se courber
Ta jeune et noble tete
Si douce a contempler,
Que nul chagrin ne rende
Sombre ton bel oeil bleu,
Mon coeur te recommande
A la garde de Dieu!

Garde ton auréole
De grace et de candeur,
Et ta douce parole
Qui fait vibrer le coeur!
Accepte cette offrande
D'un triste et dernier voeu!
Mon coeur te recommande
A la garde de Dieu.

And now to resume my prosaic Viennese reminiscences. There was not any English chaplain at Vienna in our time; and on Sundays Richard and I frequented a high Lutheran church, at which the services were not of an ultra protestant type. We, Richard and I, had a master who taught us Latin and Greek. We made acquaintance with one or two young Austrian officers

in barracks, so that we saw something of Austrian soldier-life, but not enough to pronounce upon it. We fancied that there was a somewhat unfriendly distance - greater than in the English army - between officer and private. The discipline also seemed to us harsh. The cold was intense. For four months the snow was never off the ground. The private sledges were brilliant, the harness being studded with silver bells, and the coachmen wearing almost priceless furs, Even the hackney coaches were on sleighs. At every stand their drivers would greet one with the words 'Fahren Euer Gnaden' (will your worship drive?) pronounced 'Fahr-i-gen'! In the Spring when the snow was gone, my father had the honour of being presented to the Duke of Bordeaux, the French Pretender, who came incognito to Vienna. My father described him as having most pleasing manners and a countenance full of benevolence - withal right royal. The Duke had broken his leg, and my father placed at the Duke's disposal our chariot, - which had perfect springs, and which had been newly painted and furbished up. For some good reason the offer was not accepted.

Archer's letters from England at this period are non-existent. In the Ambassador's bag used to come for us the monthly Nos. of his *Faust Part II*, as they appeared. The opening Scene of Act I had been taken in hand by our father, who, it must be admitted, dealt with it as though it were rather an original poem than a translation bound to exhibit a certain degree of faithfulness to the original. As a consequence, the critics were severe on this introductory Scene, and rashly concluded that the rest was equally unfaithful, which was as far as possible from being the case. The amusing part of it is that <u>at this time</u> Archer knew German as perhaps few other living literary Englishmen knew it. This was his second publication - the first having been *Turandot*. It was allowed to sink into a speedy oblivion. My brother re-wrote that pleasing though unhappy 1st scene; but, as I fancy, never found an opportunity for publishing it. I may mention that his aim ever was to reproduce in English the effect of the original poem, - not to

render word for word, which should be left to baldest prose. A curious contrast, if nothing more, is presented by the favorable reception accorded to Mr Hayward's prose ~~rendering~~ translation of *Faust Part I* some ten years before. Hereby Mr Hayward was lifted at once into the front rank of literary men; and the doors of society were thrown wide open to him. 'Habent sua fata libelli!'

Amidst the general neglect, Archer sent a presentation-copy of his *Faust Part II* to his venerable boyhood's friend, the Princess Louise of Wied, with the following

*Sonnet*

This wildest segment of a mighty mind,
German in outward form, in inward core,
A work, like some deep mine, in which the ore,
Where richest, furthest neath the soil we find,
This in a sister tongue have I designed
To render not unworthily. Nay more,
Its author's purpose have I dared explore,
And striven each part in one vast whole to bind.
Do thou, O honored Princess! deign regard
With one approving smile my bold endeavour.
A critic just, but kind as just ert thou!
And thy approval were in sooth reward
For this loved toil! Believe that I for ever
Before thy grace serene will gladly bow,
And beg thy kindly favour aye as now.

Few who are acquainted with my brother's rendering of *Faust Part II* will grudge him the scrap of self-assertion contained in these words of the

Sonnet ‘not unworthily.’ They are the protest of conscious worth against neglect.

Let me give an extract from a generous criticism contained in the

*Leipsig Literary Gazette*

‘BIätter für die literarische Unterhaltung’ of 6th and 7th June 1843

———

‘Hayward recommends Englishmen, from veneration for the first part of Faust, not even to read, far less to translate, the Second, since the former is so strikingly concluded by Margaret’s dungeon scene; and the continuation, embodying as it does the world of dreams and spirits, might only weaken the effect thus produced. Since Hayward gave this advice, at least three English translations of this second part have followed the ten or twelve of the first. Our perusal of all that we have seen of these has not convinced us that Hayward was in the wrong. How should an Englishman be able to follow the phantastically labyrinthine web of thought of the German bard, when even we Germans find difficulty in tracing him mid all those heights and depths through which it pleased his phantasy to wander? A young Englishman named Archer Gurney, who, as we find, has passed a considerable period of his life in Germany, has now ventured, however, not to translate, but truly to render (wiederzugeben), this second part in the rythms of the original. This rendering we read in sooth, with ever waxing astonishment, wondering how it should have been possible for an Englishman to make that clear, through the medium of flowing verses, to the practical British nation, which has remained ambiguous (unklar) to the ideological Germans.’

Here follows an interesting ~~critique~~ passage for which I have no room. The German critic proceeds thus:

> ‘Mr Gurney has translated for the English; and a Faust Part Second, has he created for them, one which adapts itself to their moral and religious point of view, and is at the same time as clear and plain as they can desire such a poem to be. Wonderful! We too cry ‘he has succeeded in making that firm which seemed loose even to us, and in carrying that charm, which lay for us in the ambiguous, into the Absolute and Positive. And, still more wonderful! this Englishman has the true bardic spirit, and a language rich in fancy and poetry; and so well has he known to employ this language, that we Germans too follow with pleasure his flowing and melodious diction, which renders much of that perfectly clear to us that remained doubtful in the original. In a word, this English version reads better, more freshly, more flowingly,.. more clearly, than many of the enigmatical and abstract passages of Goethe’s original.’ Again the review says: ‘Here we have to deal with a free translation, free in the true sense of the word, in which the translator becomes a poet again for his own nation.’ The critic continues: ‘How admirably and characteristically Mr Gurney can also translate, the following extract from one of the comic passages will show’ - Again, ‘Many passages might be quoted from the lyric and drastic portions of this translation, in which Goethe’s striking and wonderful union of reflection with dramatic vigour are truly rendered in all their original power and freshness. In conclusion, the reviewer remarks: ‘A cry worthy of observation are the stratagems by means of which the English translator has been enabled, with full knowledge and taste, to avoid all objectionable comparisons and sensual allusions (which an English reader could not bear), without laying himself In the least open to the impulation of having incorrectly translated.’

Archer, when defending himself against the charge of too great freedom in his translation, wrote thus:

> ‘This charge has been principally founded on the rendering of the first scene. Now, as has been already fully explained, through the medium of the public press, the rendering of this first scene is executed in a completely different style from that of the whole of the rest of the work. Still it is substantially correct, though in some minor matters certainly too free. The next two scenes, though far more close to the original, are still occasionally free, though never incorrect: But what single passage in the entire remainder of the work can be pointed to, in which the full meaning of the original has not been retained? Allowances must indeed be made for differences of expression, arising from the varying idiosyncrasies of language. Any fool can translate literally, by aid of a dictionary and grammar. But a perfect appreciation of the original is needed, both poetical and philosophical, to enter as it were into its very depths; and disregarding words, to convey its full meaning and spirit to the English reader. To combine this reproduction of thought with that peculiar rythmical effect, is the office of the poet only.’

I don’t think I have given too much space to the mention of Archer Gurney’s *Faust, Part 2nd*. A more just reception of this work might have altered the whole tenor of his literary career. ~~The~~ Its failure deeply disappointed him; and to this failure I attribute his never having published his other translations or renderings from the German, *Faust, Part 1st*, *The Song of the Vale*, *Woe to the Liar*, *The Life in a Dream*, *Sappho*, *Teuton Forest Echoes*, &c. &c. - Still, true it is, his spirit was not to be broken by one adverse blow. Only, under such circumstances, Grillparzer’s couplet could hardly fail to come home to him:

> ‘Why hoard ~~for everlasting~~ your verse for ever, ~~wherefore not print~~

why not bring out your books?'
My friend, in rainy wintry weather, no place like the chimney nook.

'Warurn giebst deine Werke du enl ich nicht heraus?'
Mein Freund, bei schlechtem Wetter hält man sich gern zu Haus.

Archer's first impressions of everything English were enthusiastic. He wrote much about his two most intimate friends, Ernest Jones, after known as poet and chartist leader, and Howard Glover the composer. This last was a son of old Mrs Glover of the Haymarket Theatre. He told us in his lost letters how he and Ernest Jones would dash off the words of a song at their friendly gatherings, verse and verse about, and how Howard Glover, who had a charming vein of melody, would set the song then and there to music. He told us that he had written the libretto of a grand Opera, named *Attila*, which Howard Glover was composing at leisure. He and Glover would take the world by storm together - so he dreamt. Let me mention here that Ernest Jones, whose father was chamberlain or equerry to the King of Hanover, was at this time a Tory of the Tories. That he was a man of genius there can be little question. He only developed into a socialist - unless I greatly err - when left, after a youth spent in luxury, almost penniless by his father, who had been living heartlessly upon his capital.

I have said that among my father and Archer's acquaintances in Vienna were some noble Hungarian families. The only son, Geysar, of one of those families died; and I am tempted to quote some verses from a poem of my brother's on his death, chiefly because nothing can get forth more clearly the burning indignation excited in the young English Tory by Austrian despotism and Viennese vice.

*Geysar*

*A Viennese Memory.*

Poor Geysar: last and only heir
To all thy gallant sires had won,
Oh, who that scann'd that dawning fair,
Could deem at morn should set thy sun?
Few weeks have fled, and here stood'st thou,
Youth's light upon thy sunny brow,

Thy heart for glory all a-flame,
And ours, what art thou? - But, a name.

That name upon the open leaf
Of this, my book, thyself didst set;
One borne by many a famous chief, -
The very ink seems living yet!
But thou - In earliest April bloom
A fever swept thee to the tomb!
Few days, few hours, and all was past;
Thou sleep'st the deepest sleep, and last.

Oh, is't not well for thee, perchance,
That thou hast 'scaped the trials to come?
That ere cold doubt had dull'd thy glance,
That young fresh spirit reach'd its honor?
Here had'st thou breathed, 'midst guile and hate,
In this effete and despot state,
Too surely had'st thou lost ere long
The music of life's springtide song.

This well! - And yet, the word seems stern:

So blithe, so noble, prized so dear!
Ah, long thy mother's heart will yearn,
And dream that 'Geysar' must be near;
Oft wake at deepest dead of night,
And see thee, in her mental sight,
Still living, fresh in joy and pride,
Till memory tells, that thou has died!

Oft shall she sob herself to sleep;
Scarce, for the thousandth time, shall know
The scope of that affliction deep
Which heaves the mother's soul with woe.

And thy fair sisters, chiefly she,
Who shared thine every phantasy,
For them, what comfort can I breathe?
O'er thee, what cypress shall I wreathe?
How shall I tell them, this, their land,
Hath fallen so low, 'tis theme for joy,
That one of such heroic band,
Such race, is summon'd hence, a boy?
Cold comfort this, - which present tears
Would stay by dread of future years,
And prophesy some deluge-flood,
To whelm this hapless realm in blood.

O Austria: chill and stagnant soil,
By hordes of useless scribes oppress'd,
Themselves condemn'd to hopeless toil,
Awake, dull China of the West!
Awake, or crumble into dust!

Dried mummy, - live, or die, thou must!
Better, that earthquake, civil strife,
Than this stagnation, death in life.

Thy sons of genius heed'st thou not;
The great Grillparzer strives in vain:
Thou doom'st him to a bond slave's lot,
Who drags an ever lengthening chain!
Nay, were I evermore to seek,
How could I harsher sentence speak,
Than breathes from this, my joy severe,
That Geysar lies upon his bier?

From *Spring*

My mother became somewhat out of health in the Spring of 1842, and she was counselled to go to Marienbad and Carlobad in Bohemia for the waters. I may mention that our English maid, Maria, left us shortly before we said goodbye to Vienna, in order to become Nursery Governess in a Russian family at a very high salary. The wretched lawsuit, now moribund but not defunct, detained my father for yet a short time at Vienna. My mother, Dick, and I, travelling via Prague, spent a few weeks first at Marienbad with its sweet-scented fir tree forests, and next at Carlobad - at which latter place we made several lasting friendships round the Sprudel Ruelle. Then, our father having joined us, we posted from Carlobad, starting on the 23 July, still in the old chariot towards Francfort. Very thankful was our father to be free at last of his lawsuit, though at the loss of the suit. Not our own Court of Chancery, when at its worst, can have greatly surpassed in dilatoriness the Austrian law- court with which we had to do. On that delightful journey our route lay for a day or two beside a fine trout stream and we feasted at the Hotels early and late on trout that were perfection. We made a considerable halt in the town of Bamberg. The town was of such oldworld

interest, and our Hotel so comfortable and reasonable, that there really was no cause for hurrying on. I remember that our father had a hankering inclination for buying a palace at Bamberg - it was scarcely less - for £500! His income, though a modest one, would have enabled him, so he reckoned - to live ‘en prince’ in the quaint old town; but our mother decidedly objected to ~~becoming~~ being a princess on those terms; and we never became Bambergians.

# Chapter XVI
# The Water-cure. Ursula. Wiesbaden. We arrive at Bonn.
# 1842-1843

At the close of the last chapter I mentioned a pleasant halt that we made at Bamberg. Thence we posted to Francfort. This was in the summer of 1841. Francfort's not a place in which to linger by choice in hot weather; and as my father was not very well, he had a fancy to try what the Water Cure could do for him. Someone praised the establishment of Laubbach near Coblentz - where an English chaplain had set up his tent - and thither we betook ourselves. There Archer joined us from England. I think my father was the better for his stay at Leubbach; and I know that we were well amused there. The patients enjoyed an abundance of animal spirits - other spirits were a scarcer commodity. All sorts of amusements were carried on, quarrels were few, and hilarity was the rule. Archer was an active member of the so-called 'Pleasure-Committee.' The number of patients was considerable, and the fun and merriment went far to recover such of them as were hypochondriacs. My father wrote a skit on the Water Cure, being a *Conversation between an English Traveller and a resident Invalid*.

*Traveller.* - May I venture to ask, Sir, of what you are thinking?
*Invalid.* - Of walking, and sweating, and bathing, and drinking.
*Tr.* - And say of what pastimes you love to be talking?
*In.* - Of drinking, and bathing, and sweating, and walking.
*Tr.* - What more? for to know I am anxiously fretting.
*In.* - Why bathing, and drinking, and walking, and sweating.
*Tr.* - Indulge you not sometimes in some other plaything?
*In.* - Yes, In sweating, and walking, and drinking, and bathing.
*Tr.* - Who these orgies directs? What's his name and condition?

*In*. - Dr Petris of Coblentz, a learned Physician.
*Tr*. - Who taught him their practice? To know would be pleasant.
*In*. - One Prisonitz, a wonderful, unlettered peasant.
*Tr*. - Who taught him?
*In*. - An old woman long blazoned to fame.
*Tr.* - An old woman! - who is she?
*In.* - Dame Nature's her name.
*Tr*. - Very good, - but pray tell me, Sir, is it the fashion
To indulge, mid one's cure, in the soft tender passion?
*In*. - Yes, a certain 'Rebecca' who lives within call,
Bestows indiscriminate favours on all.
*Tr.*- On all! what a jade!
*In.* - You need not be appalled,
For 'Rebecca' is only a - fountain so called.

&c. &c.

*Final Couplet*
*Trav.* - What a wonderful process! By Jove 'twould be fine,
If for water the Doctor would substitute wine!

———

How much good music we heard at Laubbach! There was a Herr Müller who played on the piano his own very interesting compositions. One or two young German ladies played off all music at sight. A young English lady carried off the palm for pretty looks. She and her mother were Roman Catholics. To this young lady Archer addressed the following

*Lines on the Blessed Virgin*

Think not I wrong the memory pure and holy
Of her to whom ye sue:

I trust in Him, in whom she trusted wholly -
Her Son, and Saviour, too.
Oh when she bent above His infant face,
Beaming with sacred calm celestial grace,
Even whilst the mother loved, the maid adored,
Her ‘First born’ glorious, and Creation Lord.

How in her heart did she His accents treasure,
Feeling the Godhead there:
Oh sweet delight, oh all-ecstatic pleasure,
With Him to breathe the air!
To mark His steps, His childish voice to hear,
Dearer to her than light and life were dear!
Oh with what humble, holy, boundless love
Hail’d she as Son, the Lord from Heaven above:

Now, in sweet joy, in calm and love-fraught gladness
No earthly tongue may tell,
Beholds she Him released from pain and sadness,
In Heaven’s own glory dwell:
Now, blending meekly with the angels’ choir,
Doth she her Saviour praise to lisp aspire,
And, gazing on His splendours all-divine
Cries, ‘What am I, that this delight is mine?’

But oh, if there on high, the soul Immortal
One earthly pang may share,
If in pure Paradise, Heaven’s blissful portal,
May fall a shade of care, -
If those that dwell in golden Eden bowers
Aught ken that chances in a world like ours, -

Then must one sight, one scene, afflict the soul
Of her, the Virgin, who hath reach'd the goal.

'Tis where poor mortals, erring and unwary,
Led by earth's mists astray,
Trust but in her, the maid and mother, Mary,
And kneel to her, and pray;
To her, who feels, that she without that Son,
Who hath for all who love Him glory won,
That she herself, though pure as maid could be
Had no sure claim to Heaven eternity.

x x x x x
x x x x x

Come, then, to Him! and she, His mother purest,
With you, will there adore.
Who rests on Him to stand is ever surest,
Till time shall be no more.
Prayers from all saints, on earth, in Eden, rise
But He the Saviour thrones above the skies;
And Virgin, Saints, and Angels, all as one,
Shall kneel with us before the Father's Son!

From *Spring*

———

The walls and excursions were pleasing. Laubbach, the establishment, is in a narrow valley that runs from the Rhine to the Moselle. We were at the Rhine end of the valley. Some of the German ladies were of a literary turn, and I remember that when Archer read aloud, out of doors, Goethe's beautiful play *Jasso*, he had for audience a large circle of enthusiastic

ladies. How well he read it!

It was whilst we were at Laubbach that Archer fell in with a No. of the *Revue des deux Mondes* containing a prose Idyll by a French lady writer of distinction, whose name escapes me. This so took his fancy that he must needs tell the tale in English blank verse. In so doing he in a manner re-created it. The story is that of a girl who sacrifices her love for her lover to what she conceives to be a very real and solid duty of her inform and helpless parents. Extracts can do but scant justice to the poem, yet may the following lines speak for themselves.

*Extracts from Ursula*
*The TravelIer's Tale*

A sad and simple tale, in part beheld,
In part to me related, I would trace you;
A mournful memory, yet with sweetness fraught;
A plaintive charm; a holy grief; a pure,
A sacred resignation. They alone
The tale should list, who much have dreamt and sigh'd,
And something, too, have suffer'd; these, perchance,
Will find an echo of their memories here.
There a lingering melody in sadness.

Far in the north of France a town, obscure,
And all unknown to fame lies buried, near
The Belgian frontier.

x x x x x
x x x x x

One year and more, by circumstance constrain'd
Within those walls I sojourn'd, and myself
To chide their blank monotony began,
And my dull fortunes, when this chanced:

Each morn,

Seeking the fortress gate, to breathe awhile
Without the town, a pathway I descended,
By step conducting to my goal. There gloom'd
A lonely dwelling; far remote from all
The strife or life of men. Oft did I view it,
Yet scarcely mark; it seem'd so humbly meek,
So destitute, so dim, so void of motion;
Perpetual shadow reign'd around its door:
Oft the whole live-long day, sole passer-by,
Methought was I. At last one morn, its air,
Of wintry desolation struck me - and
I mused, 'How very mournful would it be
For youth to sojourn in this hoary dwelling!'
But nothing moved within the dim abode,
And so I hoped it tenantless.

Spring came.

A few weak herbs sprang up beneath the wall;
Yet of life the dwelling gave not, till
One eve (an eve of June), I chanced to view
(And view'd with trouble - some would folly censure)
A little bunch of violets, that fill'd
A glass, upon the casement's ledge. Within
Myself I said, 'Here some one lives who suffers'
And slowly, sadly, pass'd my way. Alas,
The love of flowers in that dim solitude
Reveal'd some painful want - some weary trouble -

A woeful youth, or soul that pined for youth
Through wintry age. When next I pass'd that way
The flowers were fading - far from breeze and light;
Yet were they fondly tended, cherish'd plainly:
The drooping buds still proved their owner's care.
Nor was the casement wholly closed: one ray
Of sunshine thitherward had stray'd, that seem'd
To mourn in single banishment. I mark'd
Nought living.

With the morrow's sun uprose
One day of summer glory. Even there
In that drear place, a shadow and an echo
of nature's bliss was rife. - as pass'd I slowly,
I mark'd the casement of the dwelling ope,
And straightway paused. A solitary woman
Sat by that casement, on her work intent.
One earnest gaze seal'd all my mournful visions.
Her age I knew not; but she seem'd not young;
And was not fair; at least, no longer fair;
But pale and tired, or spirit-weary. Yet
In that faint pallor, and that dark sad mien
There lay a charm for me. Her hands were white,
But long, and something faded; very simple,
Though neat, was her attire; and at her bosom
Hung the poor wither'd bunch of violets
That two short days had bloom'd. She raised her eyes
She saw me; saw, perchance, my sympathy,
And faintly bow'd her head. More clearly now
I mark'd her: she had reach'd that lingering verge
Whence youth for aye departs: how sad to view
Its last faint struggling beam! Yet, in another

Her season had been jocund summer still:
She seem'd out-worn, o'er wearied - much had suffered,
But surely not from murmurs, scarce from tears.
Her lips were pale and still; upon her brow
Sat resignation, courage, calmness; but
The calmness of the grave. The thought flash'd on-me,
'This soul has languish'd long, has sunk at last;
Awhile the flower declined, then bent more feebly,
Now hath it fallen at the end.' Some aspects
At once the secret of a life reveal.
Each day, henceforth, I mark'd her there; each morn
We greeted; and at last a sad sweet smile
Her welcome yielded.

x x x x x
x x x x x

I saw that she was poor,
and work'd for others' livelihood. One eve
I heard a harsh voice call her 'Ursula'!
She rose with willing love, and went.

x x x x x
x x x x x

By slow advances,
My age and sympathy secured her friendship;
Nay, won her confidence. In after-days,
She breathed the story of her life to me;
And you shall hear it now.

It is the story of a lover whose wooing caused the surpassing happiness. This is how she is described before that lover's coming.

Her morn of youth had melancholy sweetness.
A pale and pensive beauty, faint and tender;
A beauty, for the shade and not the sun,
Had slowly ripened in those earnest eyes,
That frail slight form, those darkly drooping tresses.
Like some fair night-flower from the gazer hidden
She bloom'd, and that pure heart sent fragrance up.
A starlight purity of nature crown'd her.

x x x x x
x x x x x

But on the lover's declaration all this was changed.
O, what a morn was that!
How dower'd with golden splendours, speechless glories!

x x x x x

The blossoms of delight by care o'er shaded
Burst from their buds, and wafted strange perfume.

x x x x x

Beneath love's summer sunshine of delight
The night-flower blush'd a rose.

x x x x x

Oh golden affluence of serenest joys.
Oh pure felicities, which, day by day,
Flooded her maiden spirit: Sweet rose-blushes
That hourly hued the lily!

Then her lover claims, as a matter of course, that she shall sail with him across the sea, and leave her parents; and this she cannot do.

To her self-set task
Pale martyr, there she stood, as half unconscious;
Breathing no syllable, no one tear shedding;
And yet no marble statue, but a woman;
A woman but a breaking heart within.
And he departed. She remain'd.

~~From Spring~~

There is more but that will do

x x x x x
x x x x x

A lowly lifelong martyr, disregarded
By the vain world, and scarcely thank'd by those
For whom she all resign'd, she bore her burden
In silent sadness, - never breathed a murmur,
And rarely sigh'd: still monument of woe
She sat beneath the shade of desolation.
Yet scarce, I ween, without some secret comfort;
A mystic calm of soul, like wintry light
That gilds the northern snows.

From *Spring*

There is more of it, but this may suffice. Few, I think, will question the presence of some tenderness, and even of some beauty, in this poem. Archer Gurney with his generally sound and robust literary judgement, detested needless and uncalled-for self-sacrifices, which only tend to make others selfish; and they who read the whole story will find, I conceive, that Ursula behaved not morbidly, but as a wise and Christian maiden should comfort herself under the like circumstances. I grant, however, that this may be open to question.

And now to go back to the world of reality. Is it not strange that belief in the virtues of the Water Cure should be almost a thing of the past? We were thorough believers. And certainly many of the guests went away apparently much better than when they came. Not all, indeed. Part of our occupation consisted in nursing a fellow-countryman, Sir Cavendish Rumbold, desperately ill, who died soon afterwards, though not I think at Laubbach. I have never seen a handsomer fellow.

Richard and I, whilst at Laubbach were within an ace of being the heroes of a tragedy, but a miss is as good as a mile. Indifferent swimmers as we were, we both took a plunge out of a boat into the Rhine. One was rescued by an outstretched oar, and the other by an over-hanging bough. By the mercy of God we got out alive, so no more need be said about it. An American gentleman who was with us, a Mr Schimmen, a powerful swimmer, only refrained from active help because he supposed we didn't need it. There were pleasant Americans at Laubbach. As a rule, we have found Americans 'en voyage' friendly and kind.

Tiring of Laubbach or of Dr Petrie, we pushed on to Marienberg, a more lordly watercure establishment, near Boppard, and within an easy drive of Laubbach. There we became intimate with some singularly nice Dutch

people named de Bronkhoret, who later visited us in England. We also struck up a friendship with an elderly primitive couple named Giachosa. The Signor was a painter of Italian origin. The Signora was very English indeed. Both were simplicity itself. I think Archer left us for his law-dinners soon after we had moved to Marienberg, - my father accompanying his eldest son as far as Coblentz. Thence the elder traveller wrote that an artificial tooth had scratched his tongue, but we attached little importance to this at the time.

We began the winter of 1842-3 at Wiesbaden, and we ended it at Bonn. That winter was a cold one, but there was plenty of sunshine to brighten things if it did not warm. Richard and I had long walks on the frozen snow. Once we walked through the woods as far as to pretty Schwalbach. There was an English colony at Wiesbaden, and we knew most people.

The little incident I am about to name may have happened on occasion of an earlier visit of my father's to Wiesbaden. I cannot be sure as to the date. An English clergyman, a Mr Ayckbowm, the spelling of whose name was apt to vary, (my father wrote of him as 'pious Echburn'), a passer through, was to spend a Sunday in Wiesbaden; and being asked by the regular chaplain to preach, hesitated, on the ground that he was too unwell to prepare a sermon. My father offered to write a sermon if Mr Ayckbowm for his part would preach it. The offer was accepted. I could wish that I possessed that sermon. A thoughtful layman's one effort in this direction is likely to run somewhat outside of the conventional groove. Sir Walter Scott, if I mistake not, wrote two sermons, but I have never had the good fortune to read them. Three or four years later, in 1846, we had the pleasure of spending a day with Mr Ayckbowm at Chester: and I well remember his two dear little girls, playing with their dolls in the most entertaining way imaginable. One of those clever children is the Miss Ayckbowm of Kilburn, a Secretary of the Church Extension Society, and busied with innumerable

other good works.

Presently - early in 1843 - in consequence of my father needing skilful surgical treatment, (the injury done by the artificial tooth proving serious) we posted to Bonn. We put up there at the Hotel de Treves, kept by Herr Franz Simrock, a son of Beethoven's publisher, a musician, and the kindest of hosts. Karl Simrock, the well-known Rhine poet and professor, a brother of our host, lived in Bonn, and we made his acquaintance. A curious thing happened at the moment when we drove under the 'porte cochére' of the Trierschen Hof, a sort of omen. The rumble or dickey of our old travelling chariot fell to the ground. No one was hurt. The chariot had served us well to the last: it was sold not long after we went to Bonn, and fetched exactly a fivepound note. Unless I err, the carriage had cost £360. Sic transit gloria mundi.

# Chapter XVII
# Bonn. Percival. Karl Simrock. A Father's loss. 1843

Soon after our arrival at Bonn we became not a little apprehensive on our father's account, and by his desire Archer was summoned from London. Then for a long time hopes and fears alternated. Whilst there was hope of recovery my father's spirits were good, and I can recall the enjoyment with which he made fun of Goethe's *Walpurgis Night*, as thus:

*Impromptu Parody*

*On the Classical Walpurgis Night*

*Faust, Part Second*

*Flies*
We bask in the sunshine -
We float in the gale.

*Witches*
We dance in the moonshine
All ghastly and pale.

*Lice*
We punish the little boys
In their heads creeping

*Crickets*
And we make a little noise

When we’re not sleeping.

*Griffins*
Look at us well - O look! Know G. stands for Griffins:
Our eyes glare like congers - our heads are like tiffins.

*Man*
And G. stands for Goethe, as blind an old fool
As ere scribbled nonsense by rote or by rule.

*Archer*
Well, that is enough.

*His father.*
Not at all - ‘tis all humbug - all - I’m up to snuff,
And won’t be bamboozled by folly like this,
‘Tho no doubt t’will be praised by each Boarding-school miss.

*Chorus*
‘Tis a jumble of sense and nonsense as well.

*Archer*
And of poetry too.

*His father*
Where - where?

*Archer*
I - can’t tell!

———

We enjoyed those lines - not, to be sure, for their intrinsic merit, but as a sign of convalescence. And Archer wrote some affectionate lines in return which pleased his father and us all right well.

*Lines*

On the banks of Father Rhine
All the flowers of Spring are waking:
Winter flies, the meads forsaking,
And the golden sunbeams shine
On the banks of Father Rhine.

Joy and love shall wing the hours:
Let us bid adieu to sadness,
Give the reins to jocund gladness,
For the present time is ours,
And they wake, the budding flowers.

He who erst in danger lay,
Fearing still, each coming morrow,
Keener and wilder sorrow,
Greets in hope the spring-tide ray,
After midnight halls the day.

As a leaf, which long hath slept,
Fearing wintry winds around it,
Bursts the fetters all that bound it,
Where beneath it night-watch kept,
Whilst cold dews around it wept:

Thus our well-loved Sire at last

Seems to pass from woe and danger;
Hopes, to which he long was stranger,
Have their beams upon cast:
May he soon forget the past!

He who thrones above the skies,
He, the Good, the Kind, the loving,
Thus our cause of dread removing,
Bide us gaze on Spring's fair dies
With most grateful smiling eyes.

Thanks to Him, who in His grace
And His loving care eternal,
Hath, with beams and zephyrs vernal,
Lent us smiles to light the face,
Hopes that all our hearts embrace.

On the banks of Father Rhine
All the flowers of Spring are waking:
Winter flies, the meads forsaking,
And the golden sunbeams shine
On the banks of Father Rhine.

Archer, besides being an immense comfort to his father - to his mother too - found leisure to read Blackstone for some hours a day. He also cultivated the friendship of Karl Simrock, some of whose poems he rendered into English. No change could be more thorough than that from the sick room to the world of romance though the two things were not kept apart, since my father took pleasure in hearing each composition of his eldest son, as it was written. Archer dared not absent himself for more than an hour at a time from the Hotel, as ~~our~~ his father soon missed him. Idleness was impossible

to him, and the creative power was strong within, so his pen - when it was not in the sick-room - was hardly out of his hand, bar when he was reading Blackstone.

Archer began, whilst at Bonn, on the 3rd April 1843, ~~an original~~ a poem of considerable length, as yet unpublished, named *Percival*. It is in various metres, and is knightly and romantic in character. The poem, which is in six lays, was completed on the 13th Decr. of the same year. I have merely seen the original draught, written mainly with a pencil, and partly obliterated. Whether any better copy exists I know not. In his *Preface* to *Percival* Archer writes:

> 'This work cannot be said to be altogether original in conception. An old German poem of the 12th century, entitled *Parzival*, rendered into modern German by that true poet Karl Simrock, was the origin of this perhaps hazardous attempt. *Parzival* was written by a German Knight and minstrel Wolfram von Eschenbach. It is extremely simple, and interspersed with few general reflections, but withal a beautiful composition, and one of the most valuable relics of the Middle Ages.'

Thus does it open:

*The Bridal*

Sweet the songs and blithe the glee,
Gay the dances, bright the mien,
Of the courtly company
Ear might mark and eye might see,
Hailing marriage harmony,
In the palace of the Queen.

Of Karl Simrock Archer has written in his *Teuton Forest Echoes*:

> ‘Simrock, a delightful poet, and a great personal friend of my own, a German through and through. His reproduction of the *Niebelungen Lied*, and his *Amelungen Lied*, and *Wieland der Schmidt*, have a world-wide reputation. The *Niebelungen* Song is a wild record of savagery, fraught with stern grandeur. Simrock was the most amiable and honorable of men: a typical German of the best kind, and I shall ever revere his memory as I loved the man.’

Characteristic of Simrock’s lighter strains is the following ballad, rendered into English by my brother, and recalling Southey:

*The Devil and the Wind*

At Bonn, before the Jesuits’ house, the wind aye doth blow.
Ye crave the reason of the thing? That every child doth know.

But ask an imp, it soon will cry its liveliness to show:
The devil with the wind once a walking here did go.

And where before the Jesuits’ house, the street doth wider grow,
There spake to his good friend the wind our old eternal foe,

‘What these good Jesuits are about I much should like to know;
‘Tis here they dwell, and truth to tell, great thanks to them I owe.

If you, dear brother wind, could wait a little here below,
To bid them a good morrow I speedily would go.

So there before the Jesuits’ church the wind doth stand and blow,

Whilst enter'd at the cloistergate mankind's malicious foe.

There did he see his soul's delight: He gazed, and gazed, 'Oho!
Here pretty tricks my friends do play, and fruitful seeds they sow.'

Then into them he sprang with joy, and there did loudly crow,
While still his friend the wind was waiting at the door below.

He waits, and waits, though centuries since then did past him flow,
And when he gets impatient, he aye begins to blow.

And still before the Jesuits' door the wind doth linger go,
Though monks and devil wander'd o'er the mountains long ago.

Now never may they come again to work us weal or woe,
But far and wide the Wind of Bonn each mother's child doth know.

———

Take one more of Simrock's poems. See *Teuton Forest Echoes*.

*The New Ulysses*

Long did I, dangers spuring,
Over vale and mountain roam,
And I now am back returning
To my well loved native home.

And while sunbeams shine so brightly,
Well known tones around me soar:
Forward, youth! for this day lightly
Reach may'st thou thy father's door.

Yes, my childhood's fair dominions,
Vine clad hills their forms display.
Sweet desire, with zephyr's pinions
Speed me on my homeward way!
Verdant woods, ye seem to know me.
Lo, at last, I reach the height
Whence my home I view before me
Smiling in the moon-lit night.

Down I hasten, joying madly,
Stand my father's house before,
Knock, and knock, and call so gladly,
But no loved one opes the door.

Long in vain I moments number,
Seat me on the steps so cold,
And the pilgrim sinks to slumber
On the stones he loved of old.

While strange visions flout and scare me,
They within to greet me come,
Up the steps they fondly bear me
To the well-loved father's home.
And when wake I on the morrow,
Round me, father, mother, bride
Smiled with eyes that mock'd at sorrow.
O, how flow'd sweet rapture's tide:
Thus, when life's last sleep hath found me,
Closed the pilgrimage of time,
May I wake, such friends around me,
In the Eternal Father's clime.

———

A great sorrow now befell us. On the 4th May 1843 our indulgent and talented father died, with whom he best loved around him. Bravely, almost cheerfully, he died, and in the Christian's faith his approaching earthly end being broken to him by the kind English chaplain at Bonn. Our father was brave whilst there was hope of recovery, braver when all such hope had ceased. His mind worked clearly to the last. Personally he had little to bequeath to his children in the shape of worldly goods, and this he grieved over. He still clung to the hope of some good arising to us from the I.O.U. from the Earl of S; but as a matter of fact it never proved worth the paper it was written on. But we were not to be left unprovided for. - Much may be said about the comfort of dying in one's own house; but death in a well-appointed inn, - and such was the Hotel de Treves - with a sympathetic host and friendly servants, where everything can be had at briefest notice, is not without alleviations. It was a ~~disappointment~~ shock to me some years ago, on returning to Bonn, to find that the Hotel de Treves had passed away with its kind master, - the house being turned to some other use.

Our father's body was laid to rest in the cemetery at Bonn. Not *Adrian's address to his parting soul* (see Ch. XIII) but these lines of Archer's were engraved upon his tombstone.

*Epitaph*

Glad was his heart, not cold, or lonely;
He wept, nor sighed;
Trusting in Thee, Lord Jesus only,
He smiling died.
'Come death!' he murmured, 'free me now:
Quick waft me hence if God allow,

For life is dark, and sweet art thou.'

His prayer was heard - his body slumbers,
His soul hath fled;
No earthly clog its flight encumbers,
He is not dead!
In light we trust, he soars above,
Where all the just departed rove
And joys in Jesu's smiles of love.

———

In allusion to our great disappointment when we found that we had vainly imagined convalescence to have set in, Archer wrote a little poem, of which I will only quote the four opening lines:

Summer now the light buds opes
That above thy grave do blow;
All delusive proved our hopes,
And, thou sleep'st, my Father, low.

In my brother's *Epilogue to Spring* written in 1853, there is the following allusion to our father: -

Alas, dear Father: thou, who first beheldest
These young lays grow beneath my boyish pen, -
My kindest poet-teacher, best as eldest,
Thou ne'er shalt look upon me here again;
Ne'er with that smile of fond paternal pride,
Which still too just severity denied!

Thou, with thy father's-love, thyself a poet,

Ay, and a sweet one, though the world ne'er knew,
(Perchance that world though some day yet may know it,)
Full prompt wast thou to yield me more than due;
To crown me with the garland of thy praise,
Whose memory makes me love those boyish lays.

Father, dear father, in a foreign land
Thou liest low: and even if England ever
Should own thy son amongst her poet-band,
Should count among her stores his poor endeavour
One of fame's choicest boons ne'er mine can be,
One glowing glance of joy to win from thee!

———

Thirteen years later, in 1866, my brother wrote the following sonnet about our father:

My own dear father, thou hast pass'd afar,
And the world never gave thy due, free praise
Of thy sweet song, and all thy gleesome ways.
Thine was the genial influence of the star
Of morn, and linked with thy kind memory are
All things of fresh and clear. But thy dear lays,
Breaking Goldsmith's smoothly polished phrase,
Won not acceptance from the throng. No bar
Is this to thy son's glad acclaim. In thee,
A kindly nature, and high manners blending,
Made thee the model of the gentleman,
Thou hadst what most I miss in mine and me,
Serenity that shrank from all offending.
Match thee I cannot. Love, I will and can.

———

Archer Gurney, to his life's close, cherished fondly his father's memory. They shared in common an ardent love for literature, but above all a true affection. Each probably was unpractical, and disposed to look for the end without always making sure of the means. The son no doubt had the devouter instincts; and yet the father had ~~often on his lips the aspiration~~ in thoughtful moments was ready to cry, 'Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.' The father, be it remembered (see Chapter I) had spent his youth in one of the worst periods, socially-speaking, of England's history - that which is connected with George the IV. Our father was scarcely what is called a religious man, yet was he of a generous spirit, and worthy of men's reverence. And we could trust him with his God. The attitude of our minds at this time towards our Heavenly Father was rather one of Trust than of assured confidence and boundless gratitude. After so great anxiety we aIl needed a restful change, and this we found at Königswinter on the Rhine, at the foot of the Seven Mountains, only a few miles above Bonn.

# Chapter XVIII
# Königswinter. The Fools of Hope. We return to England.
# 1843

Of Königswinter we ever preserved a pleasant memory. So long as we avoided the Drackenfels - apt to be crowded by tourists and Bonn Students - we three brothers found a goodly array of mountains, or perhaps I should say hills, over which to range. However we did not entirely neglect the Drackenfels, one visit to it in particular resulting in the following inspiration from my brother's pen. I do but quote a part.

*Twilight on the Drackenfels*

~~Through a broad crevice in the wall,~~
~~A casement quaint of old, I gazed~~
~~I stood, where once baronial hall~~
~~Upon the rugged cliff was raised;~~
~~And far beneath, mid shades of eve~~
~~Lay hill and dale and river fair,~~
~~While gentle Nature seem'd to grieve~~
~~O'er all the dead who slumber'd there.~~

Upon the Drackenfels I stood,
And gazed upon the silvery Rhine,
Which seem'd to my reflective mood,
For all the Past's delights to pine:
When smiled bright banners o'er each steep,
And noblest dames of loveliest hue
Gazed o'er its stream to smile or weep,
For lovers slain or consorts true.

Deep on the left, the river clear
In shadowy beauty, pure and white,
Stole through the landscape far and near
A long, long line of silver light
Hamlet's 'neath evening's rays, were seen
Like gems that grace some neck of snow,
Whilst in the distance twilight's screen
Crept on in measure sure but slow.

Upon the casement's sill I leant,
Deep lost in shadowy thoughts of grief:
I dreamt, whilst o'er the chasm I bent,
Of each departed warrior-chief.
They sleep, who ruled yon fertile glade,
Yet still that glade is smiling on;
And thus 'twill be in smiles arrayed
When I, who mark it now, am gone.

'So be it' thought I; 'envy not
The sires who died, the sons who come:
The Present is thy mortal lot;
Then let not care thy soul benumb!
We are but pilgrims here on earth,
And cause have we to joy alway
That such sweet flow'rs should spring to birth
On these bleak pathways where we stray.

'Dear Mother Earth, from holier spheres
May we not gaze with love on thee,
And thank thee, or with smiles or tears,

For all thy kindly ministry?
How many a joy to thee we owe,
When fate seem'd harsh, and friends unkind;
Mild comforter in weal and woe,
Tried comrade of the lonely mind.
'When we have smiled in happy mirth,
Have not thy roses blossom'd too?
And when we wept, dear Mother Earth,
Hast thou not spangled them with dew?
Thou hast a charm for each Ione heart,
For every changing mood of soul;
All glorious dreams of lofty Art
From thee and thine the minstrel stole.
'Yea, and thy valleys once were trod
By One who thrones o'er space and time:
Thence sacred rests thy meanest sod,
Thence is thy simplest flow'r sublime;
Thence is each thought, each word, each deed,
That careless mortals transient call,
Immortal in its boundless need,
And in the atom lurks the all.'

~~Thus mused I, when a long bleak blast~~
~~Drove through that ruined crevice bare,~~
~~As mourning strangely for the Past,~~
~~The buried since that wrought despair.~~
~~Deep, and more deep, the shades of woe~~
~~Sank o'er each cliff, each upland round;~~
~~I turn'd, and sought the vale below,~~
~~For there behind a spectre frown'd.~~

~~The Past, a drear majestic shade,~~
~~That sat enthroned in gloom sublime,~~
~~And gazed o'er each surrounding glade,~~
~~The dim remembrancer of Time.~~
~~These all were here, and now once more,~~
~~A formless and mysterious ghost,~~
~~She seems from forth her grave to soar,~~
~~And counts her pristine vassals' host.~~

~~This fissured rock, that crumbling tower,~~
~~Yon shadowy vale, yon forest grey,~~
~~All these were subjects of her power,~~
~~And all she claims with sovereign sway.~~
~~Nearer and nearer still they seem,~~
~~'Mid darkness' growing shades to press,~~
~~And mount and vale in spectral dream~~
~~Form one lengthen'd wilderness.~~

———

From *Songs of Early Summer.*

The Bonn students are divided into different clubs or brotherhoods or Colleges, by which last expression is not to be understood Collegiate buildings. These University associations were at that time far from being united in brotherly concord; and when two of them, as represented by a dozen or 60 of members, met at Königswinter, they were apt to quarrel. Sometimes they got to stone throwing. On one occasion a Student was brought badly hurt into the Hotel; and our mother revived him with eau de cologne, &c and nursed him for some hours, so earning the gratitude of his Collegium. A deputation of his brother students arrived a day or two later with a gigantic ~~bouquet~~ nosegay. When we were at Bonn little amenities

had passed at table d'hote between some of the students and ourselves. They invited Archer and me to be their guests at some of their festive gatherings; but our father's state had compelled us to decline their friendly advances.

Before passing quite away from Bonn there is yet one poem by Karl Simrock, the Rhine-poet, which I desire to signalise to the reader, entitled *The Fools of Hope*. - It ~~strangely~~ greatly attracted my brother. Presently I will quote some of its ~~verses~~ stanzas from his ~~rendering~~ version; but, first let me say what it is about. The 'fools of hope' in the poem are an affectionate old couple who throughout long years of waiting and disappointment expect the return home of their lost and only son. No delay can shake their sweet confidence. They are impervious to mockery, for hope reigns paramount in their breasts. At last some rich man, touched by their deep trust, erects on a neighbouring height a temple dedicated to Hope, and makes them its guardians. Whether or no their hope was misplaced let the ballad unfold. I have said that the poem attracted my brother. ~~strangely~~ Though he little foresaw it, he himself was to prove hope's fool throughout life; for he never ceased to hope that he might attain to some great sphere of usefulness in the English Church, ~~might be conferred upon him~~ and ~~that he might attain~~ to poetic fame. ~~Was he the poorer for this hope~~ Again, he never ceased to hope that our ~~native~~ toiling millions be blessed by protection to native industry. Was he the poorer for these hopes which remained in his case unfulfilled to the last? Nay what did the old Admiral, Sir Sidney Smith, write on ~~the~~ his prison-door ~~of his prison~~ in the Temple? (see chapter XI).

Qui espére le bien
a déjå le bien de l'Esperance.

And now for some portion of the ballad.

# The Fools of Hope

We are all fools of hope, spite of trouble and sorrow;
We live through today since we hope for tomorrow;
But a couple lived once on Hesperian shore
Who'll bear this good title, Hope's Fools, evermore.

They counted sweet hope for their comforter holy,
And would not despair when the hours crept most slowly.
For thirty long years had they look'd for their son,
Their only, their loved one, and still they hoped on,

He promised, when young for the wars he departed,
To see them once more, and he ne'er was false-hearted!
Yet have not his steps sought his infancy's home.
They hope. - Hope and love are blind. - 'Surely, he'll come.'

Already white locks midst their tresses are springing;
And still her low ditty is magic hope singing.
They will not despond; as they love, so they trust;
Their dear one has promised; the Gods, too, are just!

'Today if he come not, tomorrow the rover
Will speed - this we doubt not - the grey mountains over:
At the first early dawn we speed to the height,
And there shall rejoice when he first comes in sight.'

They speed to the mountain, they gaze far around them,
The morning hath aye on their hopeful watch found them;
And whenever a wanderer appears in the vale
They think 'tis Lysander, and whisper All hail.

And when they too clearly have seen ‘twas another,
They look forth again, that good sire, that fond mother;
And though night will fall and they turn to their rest,
Through day have they hoped, and by hope were they bless’d.

Thus watch they, still trustful, from season to season
Till time saps their strength by his slow-gnawing treason;
The wisdom mayhap of the wise may seem base
Whenever then parents their son shall embrace.

Hope’s fools are they styled, or by lofty or lowly
How rarely we meet with true sympathy holy!
Yet here was it found, for one wealthy good man
A temple to rear on the summit began.

From far and from near he his workmen did gather.
They built it with pomp, with simplicity rather;
Though costly the stone, pure and free was its scope,
And worthy its title, the Temple of Hope.

And they who so long had served Hope with devotion,
These made he its warders, with tearful emotion;
Their office alone to look out from on high
And hope that Lysander each hour might draw nigh.

All cares for this life now no longer need vex them;
Their food is still brought with the raiment that decks them
And daily the messenger stays to enquire,
If yet lost Lysander hath sped to his sire?

They answer, ‘We thank our good lord for his kindness,
But Heav’n will reward him, for Heav’n knows no blindness.
Lysander, we feel it, is surely right near.
Tomorrow, we trust, we shall answer, he’s here.

And if you would rest but an hour ere returning,
We judge that today - so our bosoms are yearning -
Our dear son will mount; you could bear the glad tale,
But, impatient, you ever depart with the gale.’

I must shorten matters here. The messenger is a bad fellow. To his confusion and vexation he actually falls in with Lysander, who is madly pressing forward to clasp his parents to his arms, and has a deal with him in horseflesh much to his own advantage. Then with malicious joy the messenger sees, as he thinks, the Temple of Hope in flames, and hears the alarm bells ring out.

And lo on the morrow he comes to that mountain.
What sees he? No fire, but joy’s crystalline fountain,
The Temple with myrtle and roses was dress’d,
The son to the arms of the parents was press’d.

The flames shewed but gladness, all dispelling,
Which good folks had kindled not far from their dwelling.
The bells but rang forth because harvest was won,
Since at last to the parents had hasten’d the son.

They rang and they ring to Hope’s fools ever gaily,
‘Whatever your fate, hope, good mortals, hope daily!’
They ring and they rang now for centuries past
That faith shall receive its due guerdon at last.

———

And now - say in a month's time - we were rested, and a day was fixed for our return to England. I should like to say a friendly goodbye to Germany, not then the mighty and united Germany that it is now, but to us for years a happy home. Germans had been our playfellows and the friends of our youth. German poesy had fed our minds: we never loved German prose. The German cuisine, washed down by good Rhine wines, had nourished our frames. That is rather a flourish, for I don't think we drank much besides water! German scenery had enchanted us. We loved everything German - always excepting German book-prose, and our hearts said 'God bless Germany' as we prepared to leave it. We were indeed to see Germany again and again, but that we knew not. Can I find a better place than this for an affectionate remonstrance addressed by Archer Gurney to Germany? True, the lines appear to have been written subsequently to the German victories of 1870, but they may serve to show the poet's love for German poesy, and his friendly apprehension lest the sweet glamour of romance pervading German everyday life should be expelled by battle ardours.

*Ein keckes Wort (aus Alt England. )*

Deutschland! hast den grünen Wald vergessen?
Veilchen, Rosen, Trimeln, - alles hin?
Klammerst dich an dunklen Ruhm's-Cypressen?
Huldigst nimmer mehr der König-nn,
Liebe, die du trugst im tiefsten Herzen?
Pfand der wahren Lust, der vollen Schmerzen.
Hast den Feind besiegt? Dass lass ich gelten, Muth und Männer-Sinn,
die stehn dir Noth,
Doch, dir zu gewinnen alle Welten,
O verachte nicht die Rosen roth,

Lilien weiss, und Mädchen-herzen reine.
Poesie, mein Deutschland, war die Deine.

Du nur wusstest im gemeinem Leben
Zu erkennen jeue holde Macht ,
Ideal, die Reichthum dir gegeben,
Frühling's Klaren Sinn und Herbstes-Pracht.
Traurig wär der Krieges-tanz der Horen
Ging das Aller höchste dir verloren!

Deutschland, greif die Macht! Auch ich will loben
Deine Helden, deiner Schlachten Ruhm:
Doch es fällt das Tageslicht von Oben.
Währ, O währ des Herzen's Heiligthum!
Kalter Schatten folgt dem Selbstsuch's-Schimmer,
Sei Dir Selbst getreu, mein Deutschland, immer.

———

If we could bid so kind a farewell to Germany, what sort of a greeting should we reserve for England? We had always been furiously patriotic. Our Constitution in Church and State had been to us a thing to rave about. English literature was dearer to us again than German. We were loyal through and through to everything English from the throne on which sat the young Queen - in whose year of Jubilee I am writing - downwards; and our ideal Church was the Anglican. We had been, as a family, expatriated for nine years; and now that we were returning home, one of us at least felt, rightly or wrongly, that he was called to high things, and we all hoped to do our duty. Conceive then, if you can, the intoxicating joy with which we, our mother and three sons, found ourselves on board an English steamboat, as I think at Antwerp, bound for the Thames. Three members of the family who had gone forth from England in 1834 were left behind in foreign graves,

and we mourned for these. But for the moment patriotism filled our hearts to overflowing. We were gladdened by the union-jack flying somewhere aloft. The ready ‘aye aye Sir’ of the sailors, in response to the Captain’s orders, were to us most musical. The very waves seemed English too. And if I am not to be foolish about a common-place event which took place so long ago, I had better emulate the calmness of Gipsy, our little Viennese dog who was of the party, and cut short these transports. As we had gone forth from England in brilliant weather, so in brilliant weather we returned. London looked, or we thought so, beautiful. Our hearts bounded within us for love of country; and I question if, in our first ardour, we so much as admitted to ourselves that London was smoky or dingy in comparison with continental capitals.

Here seems the place to quote, at least in part, Archer’s

*England.*

*Written during a residence of several years on the Continent.*

England, my England, noblest land of earth!
Land of the fair, the valiant, and the free!
Of conscious pride, and wisely-temper’d mirth,
Patron of arts, and home of liberty,
Where’er I rove, still turns my heart to thee,
There is a potent magic in thy name,
Thou long and far-famed Mistress of the Sea,
That makes thy children aye their mother claim,
With the quick flush of blood, which o’er their brows will flame

Though on the sunburnt shores of Inde they stray,
Across the ocean, in a distant clime,

A smile of love will o’er their features play,
When, tracing back the ravening course of time,
They think on thee, and all thy bards sublime;
Shakespeare and Milton, who, inspired, have told
Of earthly beauty and Satanic crime,
And in their wondrous strains, with rapture bold,
Man’s inward heart of hearts, and Heaven’s own spheres unfold.

These are thy sons, my England, thine alone:
What land can boast such glorious lords of song?
Of arts and empire thine is still the throne;
Myrtle and laurel-wreath to thee belong:
Nelson and Howe, and he, thy warrior brave,
Thy Wellington, that valiant host among,
Thy triumph seal’d on land and ocean’s wave,
And well their country’s love as laurell’d meed they may crave.

x x x x
x x x x

England, thou land of sweet wild flowers, and streams
Rippling through moss-green vales, where woodbine wild
And lily blossom ‘neath the golden beams
Of laughing May, and Zephyr’s self-beguiled
Lists, the sweet nightingale, - I am thy child,
And as thy child must love thee. Through thy dews
Gaze the blue violets with glances mild;
And myriad notes of joy, and fairy hues,
Into my bounding heart affection’s pride infuse.

Long hast thou now the home of freedom been;

Long have thy statesmen firmly watch'd thy helm;
A Pitt, Chatham, at that post were seen,
And earth has hail'd thee as her noblest realm:
Oh, shall the waves of faction overwhelm
Thy glories? Bounteous heaven, my country save!
The oak-tree moulders, tempests crush the elm,
Yet let not Britain sink in midnight's grave,
Father of Mercies, guard the free, the great, the brave!

A church, where zeal and faith with love combine,
That boasts a Cranmer, Andrews, Wilson's fame,
That claims with truth an origin divine,
A beacon lit to Rome and error's shame;
A chart that shines with freedom's temper'd flame;
Commence, that spreads her realm o'er land and sea;
Conquest, and power with liberty their aim;
If these bright gifts of Heaven maintain'd can be,
Britain shall beam in light for earth's eternity!

———

As has been said, we returned to England in the summer of 1843, - about two years before Newman left his retreat at Littlemore to join the Roman Communion; consequently, the Oxford movement was in full swing. Archer, who was but twenty three, threw himself ardently into that movement, writing many letters to the papers, some with his own name, others with his 'nom de plume' which at that time and for long after was *Sagitarius*. In particular, many communications of his appeared in the *Morning Post*. He espoused the Anglican or high-church side of the controversy, but with a powerful anti-Roman bias, born of long abode in Roman lands. Like Hal of the Wynd, the valiant smith in the *Fair Maid of Perth*, he may be said to have fought 'for his own hand.' Rarely did he, or

could he, take counsel with other churchmen, I mean leading churchmen. In truth he was somewhat isolated from the first by circumstances. There was no social church centre in London. One is tempted to ask, Why was he not at Oxford, where, let his degree have been what it might, he must have won for himself a host of friends by sheer force of character and strength of principle? I have answered that question already (see Chapter XIV); and, after all, it is likely that a certain directness and originality of view was the rather preserved to him for that he mingled little with other thinkers. Quite possibly, in any and every case, he would have done his best work as a free-lance. And besides at this time the theologian by no means absorbed the poet or even the politician. Into everything he carried the like ardour unless indeed it were the study of law, and he had several strings to his bow.

During the autumn of 1843 we paid a few visits to friends and relatives; and on one visit we were especially delighted by the scenery near Guildford in Surrey. This was so unlike to Continental scenery that it seemed to us a new world, deprived as we had been for nine years of the sight of English hedgerows and timber. We went into winter quarters in London.

# Chapter XIX
# Rock Vale. Love's Legends. King Charles the First.
# 1844-1845

The spring of 1844 found us living in a thatched and verandah'd cottage in the parish of Stoke Fleming, some two miles out of Dartmouth; let me add that it was as pretty a cottage as may be found in Devonshire. Those who know Dartmouth will hardly quarrel with me if I say that its harbour is short of beautiful. We could not well have gone to a more picturesque corner of England. We had a pony and a horse, named ~~respectively~~ Hero and Leander, but the mistake was that we had no boat. A boat would have been our natural and great resource, and we could have caught any amount of fish close to shore. By the by, fish was so cheap that a cartload of fresh cod would be brought to our door, great thumping fellows at a shilling apiece, and take your choice. It was our mother's tender fears which prevailed on us to forego the boat, though we could easily have found half a dozen ~~sailors~~ fisher-folk to teach us how to ~~manage~~ sail it. Dick would have taken command of that boat; I should have served under him; and I think Archer must have been state-passenger.

Let me find room here for a few words about Richard. He had a knack for writing society verses, but he was more given to action than to reading. If health had allowed, he would by choice have become a soldier. Have I ever said what a handsome fellow he was? His spirits were buoyant and rose in time of action. Let me mention a trifling instance of his pluck. Not long after we had gone to Rock Vale he came to my room one night - Archer being away in Town - and said, 'l hear fellows whistling and signalling all round the house, so take a poker and come downstairs with me.' He was in high spirits. I did as he suggested, when out came our mother from her

room. She too had heard noises outside and the tramp of feet and was much perturbed. ‘My dear boys, let them have all’ was what she said. We re-assured her, and went downstairs, and searched everywhere, Dick laughing for pleasure, and found the doors and windows safe much to my satisfaction. Next morning came a note (delayed in delivery) from the lieutenant of the Coast Guard, saying that our lawn had been appointed as that night’s place of rendezvous for his men, and that he begged the family would not be alarmed. Richard was by far the most practical of us brothers, and no ignoramus. Indeed, considering his desultory education, he really knew more than could have been expected, though scarcely enough to have become in these days a successful Competition Wallah. He would have made a Collector after Lord Lawrence’s own heart! As is well known, things went by favour then. So, the army being unadvisable on the score of health, we get in motion an influential friend, and procured for him the promise of an Indian writership. We fondly hoped that the Indian climate, apart from military hardship, might suit well his delicate chest; but he was not destined to try the experiment.

We rode and drove a good deal. Within ~~a moderate distance~~ two or three miles were the glorious Slapton Sands and pool, the last teeming with fish and wild duck. Slapton pool is only divided from the sea by a carriage road and a noble bar of sand. Sea birds frequent the sands. The fishing village of Tor Cross, situated at the further end of the pool, is a pleasant place at which to spend a week or so; and a few miles further on one comes upon the Start Light-house, wildIy and grandly planted on a ledge of rocks, but for all that on the main land. Be there in fine weather, if you can, but still better in a storm!

Our parish church in the village of Stoke Fleming was fairly handsome, but needed restoration which it has since received; its lofty tower is a conspicuous landmark from the sea. Our parish priest - ~~a kindly gentleman~~

worthy and honest gentleman that he was - was of an old-fashioned type, hearty, genial, innocent of ritual, in close touch with his farmers and fishermen, buying at market his own cows and driving them home, lending a willing hand at drawing in a seine on the Slapton Sands, and wild with generous excitement if a good haul came to shore. Of manly stature, he would not turn a hair at these occupations, and indeed appeared to take far more out of himself when devoutly preaching excellent sermons. We liked him well. Who could have supposed that the farmers would have fought a man so much after their own heart about the washing of surplices? But they did so; and consequently, if I mistake not, he would wear the same surplice, as a protest, from year's end to year's end. Truly, the abolition of church-rates has proved to the clergy not without compensations.

The primary attraction of our new abode for us was that we had for neighbours near relatives, Colonel Wooldridge of Wadstreigh (the cousin Warwick of Chapter II) and his family. But even without that recommendation, Rock Vale might have pleased us well. Its situation was lovely, close to the beautiful coast, with sea-cove and beach of its own. The way down the cliff to this cove was partly by a practicable path, and partly by an easy ladder staircase. In that cove, all through the summer weather, Archer would sit for many an hour daily, with chair and table just outside of high-water mark, and amply provided with pen and ink and paper; and there he wrote countless poems and Magazine or Review articles. It was his fine weather study. I think one of the earliest Magazines of which he joined the staff was the *English Churchman*. He contributed many notable articles to the *Foreign Quarterly*. Later he was a frequent writer in the *Theologian*, the *New Quarterly* and the *Union Review*. Perhaps he did ~~most good~~ best work of all for *The English Review*. He was a contributor to other periodicals besides those I have named. A selection from these hastily written and yet thoughtful compositions might possibly be worthy of republication. If Archer Gurney was nothing else, I claim for him that he was unsurpassed in readiness. Editors, when hard up for matter, had only to suggest to him an

interesting subject, sending withal the needful book or books, and the M.S. they wanted would be pretty sure to be in their hands by return of post. A friend writes: 'I well remember your brother once retiring to another room, when spending a long evening with us, just to write an article for a review, which had to be despatched without loss of time. This he did most effectively within an hour and returned to us with a mind entirely unpreoccupied.' I except scientific subjects, of which he knew nothing, - having been born in a pre-scientific age. Indeed, it would have cost him no colossal effort to fill a whole No. of a Quarterly Review with powerful and interesting articles at a week's notice - a feat actually accomplished (in the case of the *Edinburgh Review*), if I mistake not, by Lord Brougham.

A few tales from my brother's pen appeared in the lighter Magazines; and every now and then he would throw off an Opera libretto at a heat. No doubt he must have groaned over the ~~inferior~~ libretti which composers commonly took up with. Apropos of this, I have come across a letter of Jules Benedict to him from which I will quote a few lines.

2 Manchester Square, 20 January 1845.

Dear Mr Gurney

'I feel equally flattered and honoured that you should have taken so much trouble about the second Act of my Opera. I too have felt all the efficiencies in the plot and the absurdities you so forcibly point out - and ever since its production have been hard at work to alter and remove these glaring faults. Unfortunately this change has been completed by my friend Mr Klingemann in German, and now I fear it will be too late to avail myself of some very striking and dramatic situations which you have most skilfully introduced - principally the meeting of Alberto and Sorango - and the last scene which has in your

version an immense power and interest.
&c. &c.
Yours truly & obliged Jules Benedict.'

To resume my brief mention of Archer's miscellaneous literary labours. In the *Morning Post* he made frequent appearances, pleading for protection as against free trade, and opposing O'Connell's campaign in Ireland, which, as compared with that other Plan of Campaign now being carried on by Messrs. Healy, Dillon, O'Brien, Parnell, and their English allies, was mild indeed. No doubt, his letters, when I come to them, make some mention of these innumerable contributions to periodical literature. The attention of the creator of all this mixed multitude of M.S.S. ~~writing~~ written in the Rock Vale cove, would be diverted now and then by a stray porpoise disporting itself only a few yards away, or by the terrified rush of a shoal of small fry escaping from some monster of the deep and leaping right out of the water, or by the sweeping past of a sea-gull on the wing.

It was in this next poetical of studies that *Love's Legends* were written in the summer of 1844, the publisher of the little volume being C. Mitchell, of Red Lion Court, Fleet Street. ~~They~~ The legends are scarcely worthy of their author, but have been rewritten. They are three in number. The first, *Adhemar's Vow*, was written with a ~~mighty~~ rush in the very false gallop of versification. Here is the opening ~~verse~~ stanza:

They come o'er the mountains, they came o'er the sea,
The Saracen host in their pride;
From east and from west, from each Paynim countree,
Thus throng like to locusts that cover the lea,
And Christendom's lords are defied.
Oh! If Heav'n in its grave should not merciful be,
In vain will earth's Saviour have died.

Near upon two hundred stanzas in this metre, though all of them spirited, are ~~plainly~~ a mistake; and so thought their author first and foremost when it was too late.

The second legend, *Bertha*, is the story of a German maiden who is betrayed by her lover. It has some tenderness and beauty, but it not up to the highest mark. It opens well with a grave invitation to Germany:

> The pinetrees vast, the forests hoary
> Of ancient Germany I sing,
> Where rose the Teutons' chant of glory
> To Herrmann's praise their Warrior King.
> Where freedom's shelter found his race,
> When Romans gave but traitors grace,
> Where since wild liberty hath dwelt,
> Though few save beasts its impulse felt.
> The agile stag, the hardy boar
> Still blithely through those forests bounded.
> The mortal chants resound no more
> Which erst through those deep wilds resounded.
> Oh proud Teutonia, fallen art thou!
> The nurse of Freedom is not free.
> &c. &c.

*Bertha* was begun and ended on the 22nd August 1844.

The third legend, *The Peri*, is written in ~~every variety of~~ many metres, and is ~~very~~ pretty - even graceful - nothing more. It is in the style of Moore's *Lalla Rookh*. It was begun and ended on the 24th August 1844. Four lines of my brother's composition seems to me as applicable to these legends:

Faint gleams there are in twilight born
That shine before the affluent morn.
Young flow'rets bloom, ere springtide glows,
That usher in the royal rose.

Such a 'royal rose', as I conceive was *King Charles the First*, a Dramatic Poem in Five Acts, ~~written~~ turned out in 1845 or just a year later, in the same glorious sea-side workshop. I was reading at the time with a tutor, Mr Killpack, at Stoke near Devenport, and the post brought letters from Rock Vale that to me were full of interest, for they contained long extracts from the dramatic poem in question, as day by day it was written, say rather was poured forth like a stream of molten ore from the poet's mind. The poem was full of dramatic fire, though not intended for the stage. The first three Acts were written in three successive days, or at the rate of an Act a day. Having warmed to his work, Archer wrote the last two Acts on the fourth day. The whole was struck off at a white heat, but much thought and reading had gone before the putting of pen to paper. *Clarendon's History of the Great Rebellion* and Burnett's *History of his own Times* were among the works consulted. Corrections there would be few, and here was my brother's weak point; for although ninety-nine times out of a hundred he may have hit at once on the best word, yet on the hundredth occasion the actual word employed could and should have been improved upon; and, dear fellow, he was not patient of verbal improvements, affirming that the happiest expression ever came first. In spite of this, the wonder is, as it seems to me, that *King Charles the First* did not achieve immense popularity. 'Oh then, it failed?' I hear some reader say. Yes, it failed. The same reader may ask, 'Don't you think the reasons for failure may have been valid? And are you, the author's brother and biographer, likely to be an impartial judge?'

There! I feel relieved after setting down on paper these posers. Let them count. But I am not wholly out of heart, for I have something to fall back upon more unimpeachable than my own judgement. Those persons who have read the poem, and have talked about it to me, have been moved to a very unusual degree. The poem takes the King's side against the parliament. Was not that enough to condemn it in the eyes of many critics? What Englishman's character has been so darkened and maligned as that of the royal martyr? Conceive how deep the prejudice must be when even Sir Walter Scott could, in *The Fortunes of Nigel*, make James the First say of his son to Heriot the jeweller, 'O Geordie, Jingling Geordie, it was grand to hear Baby Charles laying down the guilt of dissimulation.' Let me cheer my own spirit and that of my royalist readers by quoting here Isaac Williams' monumental sonnet, prefixed to the third edition of *King Charles I*; for, although a failure it did reach a third edition.

King Charles I.

I saw a Royal Form with eye upturn'd
Rising from furnace of affliction free,
And knew that brow of deep serenity,
Whereon, methought, a crown of glory burn'd,
With a calm smile, as if the death-cry turn'd
On his freed ear to seraph sounds on high!
Still in the guilty place the hideous cry
Bark'd impotent. In quiet hope inwin'd
Was his poor fleshly mantle; but the breath
Of our bad world o'er this unquiet stage
Flouts his blest name, unpardon'd e'en in death,
And thus his holy shade on earth beneath
Still walks mid evil tongues from age to age
Bearing the cross: his Master's heritage.

But no unkindly word for evermore
Can reach his rest, or pass th' eternal door.

Isaac Williams.

———

Again and again, in spite of neglect and failure, my brother's heart was cheered by the enthusiasm of those comparatively few persons who read the poem. The home circle was unanimous in praise, Richard was entranced, so his letters assured me, and I heard that our mother's sympathetic tears had fallen fast and thick.

The friends to whom the poem was first read were unaffectedly interested. Those friends were our near neighbours, the Clarks of Redlap. A more intelligent audience it would have been hard to find. The family at Redlap consisted of father and mother and three daughters. The father - Samuel Eschalaz Clark, originally spelt Clerk, of good old English extraction, - was of Spanish descent on the maternal side; and of him it may be said that, though the gentlest and least assuming of men, he was of heroic stamp, and no less thoughtful than brave. Once Mr Clark's presence of mind did much towards saving my younger brother's life. Richard, for a frolic, had attempted to climb an all but precipitous cliff between Redlap and Rock Vale; and when half way up there he stuck with loosening gasp. To descend was certain death, and to ascend was difficult indeed. Just then his mother and Mr Clark, strolled to the top of the cliff, and took in at a glance the situation. Our mother would not have screamed - she was far too wise for that - but, had she spoken, she would almost to a certainty have expressed a very little of the mortal anxiety with which her soul was wrung, and even that might have proved fatal. But Mr Clark whispered to her to be silent, and himself spoke cheerfully and even gaily, pointing out the best thing to be done. and Dick was nerved to complete that terrible climb in safety,

though with torn and bleeding hands and knees.

On another occasion, during a tremendous gale of wind, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, Mr Clark, an elderly man of delicate frame, contrived by sigalling to guide a small schooner, that was fast drifting on to the rocks, into the comparative safety of Redlap Cove. And next, having his menservants well in hand, he formed a living chain, and himself contending with the surf was instrumental in saving six men out of seven who formed the crew. Mr Clark had his hand on the seventh man when a wave dashed the poor fellow away. What hospitality to the shipwrecked men ensued needs no telling. Mrs Clark was singularly bright and of a most winning disposition, blest with a perfect temper and the kindest heart in the world. It has been our happy lot to know her even to extreme old age, full of intelligent interest to the last and of all good works. There existed a little innocent rivalry as to their gardens between her and our mother - great gardeners both. The three daughters, all very young, were well educated, good looking, and high principled English girls, stocked with a sufficiency of fun, but not the less lovers of literature on that account; and if you, my readers, know anything much nicer, you know more than I do.

Well, the Redlap family were enthusiastic hearers of *King Charles I* and I repeat other readers - so far as my knowledge extends - have followed in their wake. The critics, though some of them admired and commended the poem, did nothing weighty and effectual on its behalf; and it was not likely, even though the subject is perhaps the finest for dramatic purposes in English history, that <u>any</u> dramatic poem would find ready buyers on its own merits; for so it is, Shakespeare's fellow countrymen are not addicted to the reading of plays, and shrink very specially from a tragedy. But for all that, I am persuaded that there are tens of thousands of young people, old ones too, lovers of King Charles I, who would account the poem, did they but know it, among their most treasured literary possessions.

The second edition was prefaced by some heart-felt lines which I cannot refrain from quoting.

*Proem to the 2nd Edition of King Charles I*

Freehearted Poem, tribute of my soul
To moral greatness, oft decried of men,
Not vainly didst thou seek a worthy goal, -
For kindly hearts have bless'd thy Poet's pen,
And quiet tears have seal'd thy mild control;
Though with a careless and disdainful ken
The vehement world might sweep thy records by,
Nor pause to list their secret harmony.

For in that theme lurked magic, which, perforce,
The ~~generous~~ liberal soul to pity's rage must stir;
Truth of the beauteous rests for aye the source:
How should I fail to move, when true to her?
So hearts have bounded o'er my poem's course
With that free generous flow which scarce can err,
Which, if we ne'er should meet in space or time,
Must thrill true hearts with sympathies sublime.

O Royal Saint, men dare to mock and scorn thee,
Their clamours reach thee not in climes above:
For me, within my heart who long have borne thee,
I bow before thy spirit of deep love!
Why should we weep? Why should we wail and mourn thee?
'Tis not a funeral wreath my hands have wove:
Rather a garland of immortal bloom

All poet-hearts should circle round thy tomb.

What if some raving scribe, with fierce derision,
Defile the sacred glories of thy sway:
What if a world applaud the fleeting vision,
That seeks by slander's clouds to blot thy day:
Can tumult check one generous artless heart's decision,
Or stay one tear, or hush one loyal lay?
Can aught from pious breasts thy memory chase
Our Royal Martyr, blending pride and grace?

And saintly hearts, O record mine: have thrill'd
Above thy page with meek devotions glow,
And pious eyes with sacred tears have fill'd
And should I seek for ampler guerdon? No.
In phrase bombastic wast thou all-unskill'd
And loud acclaim is but for gaudy show:
Simplicity a taste depraved offends;
Admirers won'st thou few, yet many friends!

So then, to you, O generous company,
Brave-hearted youths, pure virgins, mothers mild,
Saints from afar descried and loved by me,
And most revered, who o'er my task have smiled,
Benignant spirits, calm and wise and free,
And many a fresh and simple-hearted child:
And thou, true friend! who gav'st such generous praise,
And chant'st thyself such heartborn British lays:

(the Rev. James Bandinel)

To each, to all, best thanks: - Methinks we all

Are friends, and friends should rest through days to come.
And if storms rage, and many a pillar fall
Amidst the democratic whirl and hum
Of nations, voice to voice may freely call,
And Britain's freeborn sons should scarce be dumb.
Thus not for ever, friends, I bid adieu,
But trust to speak again, brave hearts, for you.

But now, no more. Harsh spirits will deride
My frankness, flout my Muse as bold and vain;
Yet modesty and truth are near allied,
And many a weakness mars, I know, my strain.
O Lord, who all things here dost guard and guide,
Forgive, if e'er I touched a chord profane!
The feeble aims direct to thy good end,
And let thy blessing on my work descend!

So once again I send thee through the land,
Free offspring of my heart, to tempt thy fate:
Go, fearing nought the prowling, scoffing band,
Whose very praises would but desecrate:
High minds have prized thee, lovely eyes have scanned,
And tender hearts shall circle thee from hate.
Go then, and prove, despite foes rage, friends' fears,
Her Martyr King our England still reveres.

———

There was nothing like a consensus of praise, but individual critics expressed themselves warmly. ~~Thus~~ Here is an extract from the *New Quarterly Review*:

> ‘We find here the kindliest intentions to the body politic, the purest feelings of patriotism to the country, the most devoted loyalty to the Crown, and the most hallowed veneration to the church. Words of gentle beauty and soft tenderness. Powerful soliloquies. Stirring energy.’

And surely Ernest Jones must have written what follows:

> ‘The joint work of genius and prejudice. As a poem magnificent; as a political essay, a failure.’
>
> *The Labourer. Chartist Organ.*

This again is genial:

> ‘We do not recollect for many years to have met with a work possessing more of the attributes of great writing than the present, and we hesitate not to place *King Charles the First* at once in the very first rank of dramatic literature.’
>
> *The Musical World*

The *Morning Post* too was kind:

> ‘Artistic in its action, powerful in its language, and accurate in its historical portraiture. In Sir John Cansfield and his son the author has fitly shadowed forth the brave, and loyal to the death, cavaliers who staked all for their honour, their religion, and their allegiance.’

And not least warm is this from the *John Bull*;

> ‘Mr Gurney has the right feeling, for his subject; as loyal a hatred of the canting regicides and the sanctimonious puritan leaders, as if he had drawn a cavalier’s sword at Naseby or Marston Moor. Sustained with great power.’

———

But the *Times* was silent. The *Quarterly* and *Edinburgh Review* had nothing to say. And other leaders of public literary opinion ignored the poem. I question if in a single publication it was criticised adversely, but can’t be sure.

# Chapter XX
# King Charles I in Continuation
# 1845

I am about to devote another chapter to Rock Vale, or rather to the Dramatic Poem there conceived and executed. Such I hold to be my duty; for this *Memoir* is undertaken in order to present my brother as priest and theologian not omitting his ~~very self~~ more intimate personality, and first I have to speak of him as poet. The earliest serious original poem which he wrote is *King Charles the First*. Its merit ~~has not~~ is as yet unacknowledged; therefore, without pressing my own opinions upon any, it is the more incumbent on me to vindicate the poem, if I can, from ~~a cold and, as I believe,~~ what I hold to be removable neglect.

And now, although it be a difficult matter to suggest the beauty of an edifice by the exhibition of a few carved stones and lintels, let me jot down some short scenes such as may best bear detachment from a poem which, being dramatic, should of right be read on end.

The first Act might be headed *Strafford*, and works up to an interview between the King and his true servant in the Tower; but this scene is too long to quote as a whole, and too tender to be dealt with after a piecemeal fashion, and too ~~questionable historically~~ open to debate to be quoted without comment. I can but indicate its existence here. But I may add that Strafford entreats the King to consent to his death, on the strength of Pym's assurance that on that condition only the Church shall not be destroyed.

*Act I Scene I*
*Westminster. Before the Entrance to the House of Commons.*
*Hyde, Lord Falkland, and Sidney Godolphin in converse.*

*Falkland*

For his sake

Our monarch's, do we act and speak, dear Hyde.
What would you have? You see the world's in arms
Against us: rebel crowds will soon besiege
Whitehall. No troops are nigh. There rests not choice.
The King must yield, or (fearful thought, I own,
Yet soon perchance dread deed!) his sacred life,
Her life, the Queen dearer to him than all,
The Prince's England's weal - in fine, I find
No words to paint those horrors, which, you feel
As I, may burst upon us!

*Hyde*

No!

Our slavish fears create the dancers, Falkland,
From which those fears would fly. Could we act boldly!
Could we meet Pym, o'erthrow him -

*Godolphin*

He rests within the people's hearts, good Hyde!
They are his bulwark.

*Hyde*

Falkland?

*Falkland*

I can aid not.

Heaven be my witness, I would save my King:
And to that end concession now alone

Can aught avail.

*Godolphin*
Yes, Hyde, concession; trust us!

*Hyde*
Ay, when the sole defences of the state
Crumble away as ye do, then concession -
Concession? True: the plea of honest fraud,
Of most infantine truthful guile, is this:
Of Hampden, and of St. John. ‘But concede:’
All will be well! You would secure the mansion:
Hurl then aside some few foundation stones
To steady all the rest! ‘Tis like that they
Who ask such samples of your olden bulwarks
Will rest content with these; ay, very like!
You’d keep the arch; best crush the keystone only;
You’d save the crown, the sceptre lop away.
Concession to a wrong against man’s conscience
Is tantamount to fall! Here lies the right
And there the wrong: take once the downward path,
Abandon once the vantage ground of justice,
On grounds of what men call expedient; then
Is no return: all’s lost, - I do perceive
I speak in vain. The poison of this age,
The spurious vain delusive liberality
Which tramples upon right, and in the name
Of freedom, doth usurp tyrannic sway,
This path infected you. I scarce can hold ye
My heart’s true friend henceforth!

*Godolphin*

Nay, Hyde

*Falkland*

Dear Hyde!

*Godolphin*

We are not so resolved - -

*Falkland*

We are most willing

To hear thy counsel.

*Hyde*

Mark you Puritan,

Who issues from the door, the Brewer's son;
That most malignant Cromwell. He comes charged
With tidings of Pym's sovereign eloquence,
Which prove vile treason loyalty. Attend him!
He seeks his Puritanic friends, to spread
The rumour of this triumph! Rebel cur!

*Falkland*

Here then at least our voices jump together.
I hold the man most dangerous.

*Godolphin*

I abhor him

As poisonous toad, or viper. There's a craft
A guile, which hath no fellow, smoothes his brow,
While his stern dogged eyes -

*Hyde*

His, mark him only!

———

Is there not a ~~noble~~ gallant note struck here? ~~Has not Hyde's~~ Has not Hyde's speech the true ring? ~~of patriotic courage?~~

*Act 1. Scene II. Chamber in the Royal Palace of Whitehall*
*The casement in the back-ground commands a view of the Thames. Time, towards evening.*

.

*King Charles and Queen Henrietta in converse*

*Cries (from without heard gathering in the distance).*
King Charles! Strafford - yield Strafford's head! Awake, King Charles!

*Queen (trembling)*

Hear'st thou?

*King Charles*

I hear.

*Page (entering from the left)*
Sire, crowds beset the palace,
And urge –

*King Charles*
Go, friend! We heard their cries, See only
That none molest or mock those crowds!
Retire!

*Exit Page (L.)*

Dear Henrietta, tremble not! This is
In sooth an hour of trial: - scarce for me;
For duty far too loudly cries within me,
To leave me power of choice. But thou, a woman
Not bound as I to Strafford, - knowing little
Of his surpassing merit; feeling: too
More deeply than thou thinkest: (thought preeminent
In woman, I, for one, could ever love not:)
Thou hast a fearful contest to encounter
With thy love's fears. Sweet, dwell not on these broils!
All will be well. The people's rage moved Iightly
Will even as lightly melt to love again.
List not those cries! How strangely do they blend
With the sweet bells from yonder gothic tower,
Pealing athwart the waters. Such the contrast
Of mild religious awe to earthly clamour!
For on the morrow, and the morrow's morrow,
At this still hour those bells will still peal on
The orisons of earth, the signal holy
That heav'n and God's own kingdom here are one;
But these harsh sinful cries, the moment's offspring,
Will with the moment pass to nought away:
They, and the passions even as briefly raging;
And, as the echo of those cries, borne far
Up the deep silvery Thames, there dies in air
In the dim distance, seeming well to blend
With the calm beauty of the hour, and brighten
The melody of silence; so, the thought
Of this vain uproar shall in future years

Prove but a gentle memory! Since we shared
The cares, it wooed to life, together.

*Queen*

Charles!

*King Charles*
Dear Henrietta - see our mother, Nature,
How peacefully she smiles; as if to tell us
Such fears and cares as these need scarce amaze,
Scarce fright us from ourselves. I never saw,
Methinks, the water smile so lovingly,
Beneath the golden kisses of yon sun
Who sinks so grandly down. Yon dark clouds gather,
In the far east: they seem, as threatened they,
Soon ‘neath night’s sway shall be invade the realm
Thou holdest still, proud sun - you western verge
Of heaven: the lightnings then may leap from us
And laugh thine orb to scorn! What smiles the sun?
Poor fools, I shall arise, when dawns the morrow,
And scatter ye afar: meantime rejoice!
Live out your little hour - I would not scorn ye;
Ye too may serve your end! Can you not point
The moral to these fancies?

———

It is not for me to comment.

~~It is with difficulty that I refrain from all comment here, but, on the whole, I think that is best left to the reviewers~~.

I now pass to the 2nd Act, of which the heading might fairIy be *The Five Members*.

*Act II. Scene III. Interior of the House of Commons, Westminster.*
*An anxious murmur has crept along the Puritan ranks. Fiennes, who sits next Pym whispers to him*

*Fiennes*
King Charles is nigh to seize you, with a host
Of followers! You must fly.

*Pym*
We will withdraw! -
(Aloud) Not trembling, as convicted Malefactors,
Quit we this hour your senate's halls. The bravest
May yield awhile to Tyrant Power, and thus
Their brethren shield from risk of loss through them.
The hoariest oak-trees bend when howls the tempest,
Though firm their roots enclasp their native soil.
We do withdraw awhile, and leave ye to
Your counsels. Only rest ye still assured,
This hour confirms the liberties of England,
Or lays them ever low. Your only weakness
Can lie in self-mistrust. Be bold, brave friends!
Then Heav'n shall bless your deeds, and Tyranny
Shrink baffled from your presence. God protect ye! -

*(Pym, Hollis Strode and Arthur Hazelrig leave the House amidst great* commotion)

*Puritans (confusedly)*

Our shield and buckler is the Lord! - In vain
The wicked bends his arrows. Praise the Lord! -
O thou false tongue - that wickedly, despitefully
Dost wound the righteous - King of Babylon,
Thine hour is come! –

*A Puritan*

Against the Lord of Hosts
Belshazzar boasted him! The hand went forth –
Mene - Tekel - Upharsin!

*Cromwell (rising)*

Men and brethren,
I do beseech ye, hear me, for the Spirit
Doth move my tongue to utterance. Hitherward
The Oppressor hastes! When he doth speak to us,
When he demands our brethren, let us yield
No answer - none! So shall our godly silence
Seem to his carnal ears more terrible
Than shouts of armed warhosts! List we all
His words, and in our heart of hearts reply we,
'How is the Oppressor fallen! He hath come
To sue our aid. We trusting in the Lord
Will set at nought his malice.' Men and brethren,
Your servitor hath spoken.

Puritans
Godly Cromwell!-
The Lord is with him! Ha, the King! The King!
In silence stern receive him!

*Pause. Then enter the King, followed by Lord Digby and Retainers, who remain at the entrance. The King steps forward, and mounts to the President's Speaker's chair which its owner has deserted, from which he gazes round the assembly. Profound silence reigns.*

*King Charles (half aside)*

They are not here!

(To the House)
I grieve the occasion, Sirs,
Of your King's presence. Yesterday I sent
For those, whom I have charged with treason. You
Replied, with no obedience, but a message.
I must declare to you no King of England
Can be more careful of your privilege
Than I. But Treason cannot claim its use
Therefore I come to tell you plainly, Sirs,
That I must have these men, I see they now
Are flown, and thence my search is useless here.
Should they return, I shall expect you, Sirs,
To send them to me straight, And I assure you
I do intend no force against these men,
But such proceedings as your laws commend
Most honourable. Let me add too this,
Since for the moment I have failed my purpose;
I have no will, no thought, to work you harm:
Whatever for your good my tongue hath granted
And for my people's good, that do I swear
To execute: and so, God keep you ever! –

*(The King passes slowly and with dignity towards the entrance.)*

*Confused cries from the House*

Privilege! Privilege!

*Cromwell (in the foreground, aside)*
King Charles, I hate thee! –
That hate my soul, shall kindle; others' souls
Shall also light with fire divine! - perchance
Shall lead - whither, weak erring fancy; stray'st thou?
Down, down, unruly thoughts! Jehovah, reign!

*Confused Cries from the House*

Privilege! - Pym and Hampden! - England! - freedom!

*(Scene closes)*

The action of the 3rd Act turns mainly on *The ~~Attainder~~ Expulsion of the Bishops*. It is so little I can quote, that there is the more need for stating this at the outset. I have no space for the actual debate.

*Act III. Part of Scene II. Vestibule of the House.*
*(The loyal peers retire on the right. The clamour is constantly increasing without. Words from the Crowd's 'War-song' are heard at intervals).*

*Cromwell (triumphantly)*
Children of wrath, ye fly in vain! The Lord
Shall overtake ye! Is your pomp brought down
Even to the grave? When said ye in your heart,
We will ascend above the heights of Heaven,

Dreamt ye of this dishonour? - Hither - hither,
Ye chosen of the Lord! With loud acclaim
Proclaim the triumph his! With sharoms and trumpets
Set forth his praises: Let the saints be joyful:
A two-edged sword be in their hands to execute
Vengeance upon the heathen! Bind their Kings
With chains, their nobles all with iron fetters:
Such honour claim his saints! Praise ye the Lord!

*Rebel Song (from without)*
Give forth each criminal!
Slaughter the traitors all!
Low let our foemen fall!

Hampden, we call on thee;
Pym, this thine office be -
Guard England's majesty!

So crushed be Tyrant power!
So sealed be Freedom's dower!
This is the chosen hour!

The Petitioners make their entrance tumultuously. *Cromwell places himself at their head. Many Peers &c issue, some in wonder and alarm, some in tumult, from the Hall of Council. Amongst them the Earls of Holland, Essex and Northumberland.*

*Petitioners (confusedly).*
Hail, great Northumberland! Hail, worthy Holland! Brave Essex!

*(Their cries are taken up and repeated by the Crowd without).*

*Earl of Holland*
Welcome, gentle friends. We stand
Prepared to hear your wrongs.

*Earl of Essex*
But enter! Enter!
Even at the House's bar with all due form,
We'll list you.

*Petitioners.* Essex – Holland – live.

*(The Peers, Petitioners, &c. stream into the Inner Hall)*

*Cromwell (in the foreground)*
These sons
Of Belial - three malignant Peers, will scarce
Gain courage now to taunt the Lord's own people.
Hark! now more godly sounds! yet rife with zeal
And holy resolution! From this hour
Date we the fall of Babylon!

*Puritan Song (without).*
Smite ye the rulers, lay them low!
The Lord our God shall overthrow.
Dash ye their heads against the stones!
Such vengeance many a crime atones.
The Lord commands, - his Saints obey:
Cast down, uproot, consume, and slay!

*Rebel Song (blending in wild confusion with the Puritan strain.)*

So crushed be Tyrant's Power!
So sealed be Freedom's dower!
Wake! This is vengeance' hour!

Act IV might be headed *The Battle of Naseby*. The tender and spirited episodes of the conflict cannot be reproduced here. There is only space in my page for a hasty glance into the rival camps before the battle begins.

*Act IV. Scene I. 1645. June.*

*Royal Camp on the heights near Harborough. The scene represents the interior of the King's tent. The curtains are drawn aside in the backgrounds, so as to afford a general view of the Royal encampment, and the distant hills and moors. It is seven in the morning.*

*Horseman's Drinking Song (heard from the distance)*
Care, care, go hang! go hang!
Fate life's cords may sever;
Still we'll sing, as first we sang,
The king for ever!

Death, death, come buss, come buss!
'Twere a vain endeavour,
Should'st thou hope to trouble us;
Come, we greet thee, shouting thus,
The king for ever!

Life, life, beyond the grave,
We will fear thee never!
We are bold as we are brave,
Loyalty our souls should save -

The king for ever!

*King Charles, who has issued from the interior compartment of his tent on the right, approaches the background and listens to the concluding verse of this. He reclines his head mournfully and appears to pray*

*Young Cavalier's Song (heard from the distance)*
1.
My lady she rose in the dawning so clear,
And bent from her casement to Love's Cavalier:
Go, fight, for thy King and thy country, she said,
The banner of Glory above thee be spread,
And Angels hold guard o'er my Cavalier's head!
Yes, he sighed, King and country lay claim to my sword,
But love is my ruler, and Love my reward.

2.
They met too below. Could she frown on his prayers
When he sped o'er the hills rebel roundheads to dare?
No, many a sigh did she breathe for his fate,
And called on Heav'ns kindness to shield him from hate;
Then blamed her sweet tenderness - dear one, too late!
For the kisses, which trembled, with passionate fear,
Were sweeter than prayers to the young Cavalier!

*(King Charles (letting fall the curtains in the background after a pause)*

Light songs and drunken revels! Little thought
On the great hazard of this day - on God -
Or on God's judgments. May I hope for conquest
Whilst my best friends so all unworthy prove them

Of Heav’ns high guard? - Alas, my noblest friends
Have past from earth - as Heav’n had ta’en them hence
To spare them future horrors, ills too great
For even them to remedy. Carnarvon,
Brave Lindsay, Aubigny, even more than these,
My Cornish worthies, Slanning and Trevanion, -
With their most loyal faithful gentleman,
Whose dear loss caused me tears I proudly shed,
My own Sir Bevil Glanvil! Add to these
Young noble Grandison; Godolphin, too
Who proved he loved his King; and then, thou, Falkland!
Who by thy stainless loyalty redeemed
Thine early weakness, Ask we not of clouds,
Whose pure snow altitudes seem kin to heaven
To shield us from the north wind’s tempest vie
Or summer’s crimson radiance. All have Pass’d
And left me - in the west, a lawless Goring,
Licentious, impious, worse than twenty foes,
Though brave; another Glanvil, how unlike
To his undying namesake! (with truth’s star
Match some vain firework!) Best of all
Thee, valorous, truthful Hopton, for whose life
I should thank Providence! Yes, thou liv’st still.
And here too, I have friends. Yet how,
How close my eyes to the unwelcome truth,
That license stains the best of these? Not Astley,
Not Lichfield, - these are faithful to their God
As me! But for my nephew Rupert, and
His friends, - alas, that I should have such cause
To blame them! Can I e’er forget, good Heaven,
The recent storm of Leicester - my, my Leicester?

(For am I not its King?) Wherein my subjects
By Rupert horsemen first, and then by others,
Seduced through their example, were - or slaughtered,
Or pillaged, at the least. With friends like these
Should I even hope for victors? Who's to check
The insulting rapine of such loyalists
Triumphant? Rupert even could not stay them,
Once bent on vengeance. And who'd woo an earthquake,
Thou 'twere to stay some plague's slow sapping enmity,
At peril of engulfing all in night
And measureless ruin? Then too, if I turn
To our foe's ranks, I find rebellion there,
'Tis true; but yet a seeming piety Religion,
Even misdirected, proves some check, as where
God's sunshine falls, though hard and rough the soil,
Scanty the foliage and the blossoms few,
Beauty can scarce be wholly absent ever,
O King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, if Thou foresee'st
In thine eternal wisdom, that my triumph
Will not secure thy Church from fall, nor save
This state from rapine; - and men's minds are yet
So all-distorted from their bent, I fear
In any case such ills; - then reach, O Lord,
Thine end, even by my fall - my death! - if that
Seem good to thee. Perchance remorse will work
Even in my foemen's hearts, what bore defeat
Could never. - Steps are nigh!

———

Now take the companion picture.

*Act IV. Scene II*
*Interior of Cromwell's Tent in the Rebel Camp*
*Cromwell alone. He is seated at a table in the foreqround, and apparently lost in thought. After a pause he speaks.*

The hour is nigh of vengeful retribution!
This day crown is won or lost by thee,
Charles Stewart. More hast thou to lose, perchance,
Than I to gain: for I - Hence selfish visions!
I am God's champion. England's cause is mine:
'Save England, and then perish Cromwell!' - Speaks
The Spirit thus? - Not so: for that low voice,
Within me breathing ever, like still waters
Murmuring through inmost caverns, what is this,
If not the Spirit's voice? - The Fiend's? - Hence, hence,
Suggestion hellborn! No, should Heaven thus will,
Thus destine me for sway, am I not far
More fit, to rule an empire than this weak
Poor Charles? My conscience answers, 'Yea, I am so!'
Should some pale star of sunshine flood the world?
The sun, God framed - that rests his creature too.
But one thing doubt I not: whate'er my fortune,
Be my sway ruled above, or no, this King
Must die the death! - Yes, yes, dissemble not
Thy purpose with thyself; elected Cromwell,
Elected for this work! - though it may fit thee
To veil, in God's good cause, thy dust designs
From common eyes – Who now, I may say boldly,
Who now can hope to check my will? avert
My settled purport? Hollis? Powerless is he
Against one word of mine; and Vane and St. John,

They think them mighty, but their Lord am I,
The barren crag, whose snows do feed their torrents,
As they shall find ere long: - for Fairfax here,
And Ireton they are parts of me, nor dare
To think without me. Two, who might have dared
Oppose, are earth's no more - John Pym and Hampden,
For Pym, he was not girded to the work
Of vengeance, false remorse oppress'd his spirit;
He died the death of those who leave the plough
Ere half the field be furrow'd. - But thou, Hampden,
Thou had'st perchance subdued me; for thy guile
Was matchless, as the serpent with the dove
Had waxed incorporate, yet its fangs retaining.
Thou wert the Gospel's tried Ahitophel,
Whose godly wisdom served Heav'ns King alone,
No earthly monarch. Thou art gone, and now
I fear no rival save this King, this Stewart!
Charles Stewart, thou art a mighty foe, I own it,
Even in thy weakness. I am feared by men,
But thou art loved! Thou steal'st their hearts away
By thy faint smiles, and in adversity
Might'st yet subdue a nation. Thou must die,
Charles Stewart!

———

I must perforce stay my quotations, and have no space left for the 5th Act which might be entitled *The Royal Martyr's death* no whit inferior to the four preceding Acts. I am as bad as the critics, for I have done nothing like justice to this noble drama. Let me again point out how young was the author - only 25. Just a year before (see preceding chapter) he had dashed off three narrative poems, for instant publication, entitled *Love's Legends*.

These are indeed a foil to *King Charles I*, and give evidence of the immaturity of the writer's powers, although I venture to think that his lyrics and translations were good from a very early date. The stride forwards in a twelvemonth was enormous. At this time his strong desire was to enter parliament. The fire which he has thrown into the Parliamentary debates in *King Charles I* might suggest as much. ~~A year or two later~~ Within a year he was to make one attempt to represent the West Riding of Yorkshire, which shall be related in due time and place, and so, goodbye to *Charles the I*. Whether or no we have here to do with a masterpiece I leave for others to decide.

Talking of masterpieces, my brother Archer it was who taught me to understand and admire Robert Browning's immortal works. He was among the very earliest critics to call public attention to Browning's genius, and indeed never tired of expatiating enthusiastically on the very real ~~but somewhat~~ though recondite beauties of his dramatic muse. Browning's wonderful Dramatic Lyrics were published about this time. How well I recollect fetching two or three Nos. of '*Bells and Pomegranates*' from the Plymouth booksellers as they appeared <u>and</u> reading them through the streets of Plymouth with ~~wild~~ intense delight. And how happy I was in after years, when laying my homage at Browning's feet, and telling him of my walk through the streets of Plymouth in his ~~enchanting~~ entrancing company. My tutor, Mr Killpack, did not appreciate Browning's poems. For that, he would have needed to hear Archer's reading of them. I may mention that his reading, in particular, of 'The Flight of the Duchess' was an inspiration. And let me add, though this be to forestall events, that his reading of Tennyson's 'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington' was equally tremendous in effect.

# Chapter XXI
# Political Aspirations. The West Riding. A Death in the family.
# 1846

In the month of January 1846, Archer Gurney's parliamentary aspirations received a powerful impulse. The country was rent by the rival cries of Free Trade and Protection to Native Industry, and it will be admitted that the free traders were for the more part the better speakers. A great contest was imminent in parliament, then about to meet, and Gurney longed to be in the fray. Silence he could not keep. He spoke as the Protectionist delegate for South Devon at a huge central Protectionist meeting in London with the Duke of Richmond in the chair, and gained some laurels. I think I do Gurney no injustice if I say that the principle from which he started was that, with the exception of ~~capitalists~~ idle freeholders, most men have to be producers before they can become consumers. And thence he argued that the welfare of the community at large demanded that producers should be adequately remunerated for their labours. It was first and last in the interest of the wage-earning classes that he fought the battle of protection. I was at the meeting, and well remember the general hush and forward movement of the vast assembly, - jaded as men were by the lateness of the hour - when he began to speak almost last of all eloquently naturally and with deep conviction. But on that occasion he was only one of many speakers; and he desired if it were possible, singly to face all opponents. So only a day or two before parliament met he hired Willis's rooms for a public meeting, and advertised it in the usual way - the hire of room and cost of advertisements coming in equal proportions, to a total sum of 40 guineas. As will be presently shewn, his ~~practical~~ object was to bring himself to the notice of a great constituency. He made sure of one first-rate opponent, and got a few personal friends to attend; but the room was crammed with free-traders. An

omission would seem to have been that he had failed to secure a weighty chairman. I was not there, but fortunately can give my brother's account written on the next day. And if allowance be made for a young man's enthusiasm and possible overestimate of his own powers, I am assured that a more truthful narrative could not be penned.

Thursday
4 Stanhope Street

My dearest Mother

Much will you be disappointed with the issue of last night's meeting - or rather with this morning's report - for only conceive! The Tory Papers sent no reporters, and only the Chronicle and Advertiser (which I send you) have taken any notice of the meeting. Of course I had scarcely any protectionists in the room - and therefore the meeting decided in favour of free trade - but I held my ground. My great opponent and one of the leading members of the League, Mr Thompson said in replying to me that though he had attended many meetings of protectionists throughout the whole length and breadth of Britain he had never yet heard (it must out!) such a clever speech as mine on my side of the question. He went on in this strain, 'And I say to all the Dukes, henceforth he silent! You should thank Heaven that you have gained such an advocate. Make the most of him, for if anyone can redeem your cause, it is surely he!' with much more to the like effect which was loudly cheered by all the free-traders present; and again, at the conclusion, three cheers were given me for my fairness, straightforwardness, generosity &c. I need not say that neither Thompson nor any other free trader grappled with my arguments. They spoke to the passions however and were successful - but the attention with which my arguments were listened to against all the preconceived

notions of the meeting was truly astonishing. The force of truth for a moment prevailed; then again came some fierce denunciation of the aristocracy which was looked upon as an answer to everything I could say. However, you must not conceive Mr Thompson a fool: there was more reasoning in his speech and more talent generally, I should say, than in any one I have read of Cobden's or Bright's. But in my reply I smashed all his arguments one after another, and in fact, as far as reasoning went, had infinitely the best of the whole of them. For there were five or six speakers, all for free trade - Ernest Jones amongst them, who spoke cleverly but rather made a mess of it. I motioned everyone who wished to speak to the platform and by tact and good humour produced the most favourable effect on the audience. You will not find very much of this in the Chronicle and Advertiser, though for strong political opponents they certainly are complimentary. Even now I would not on any account annul or recall the meeting if I could. In the first place I have proved my powers to myself and gained still greater confidence. In the second I shall send copies of the Chronicle and Advertiser to Ferrand - and he will see even from the report of our enemies that I personally came off with flying colours, which may certainly be an additional inducement to him to support me for the West Riding. Dr Unworth was at the meeting, and made me come home with him with another friend to talk it over - pretty late, i.e. midnight - for the meeting lasted four hours. I have been compelled to say all this because the Press treats me so scuroily; may my day come yet!

Yours most affe Son

Archer.

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The generous boyish strain in which the above letter was acknowledged by Richard is not without interest.

Rock Vale
14 January 1846

My dear Archer,

I am not going to bother you with a long letter, but I cannot resist writing to tell you how much gratified I was with the evident eloquence, and what is more the great courage, you displayed the other night. In your defeat, if defeat you may call it, you have shewn yourself a thousand times superior to ~~all~~ the men you are destined to lead; you alone of all your party have dared to call a public meeting in London, to face a clever and active agent of the League, and even by their accounts you did it nobly. Believe me, my dear brother, a hundred such defeats and a hundred other disappointments will only make me think if possible the higher of you. In reading your letter I in no way felt disheartened, being so convinced as I am of your genius. Yorkshire may come to nothing, Ferrand may not answer you, Cobden may laugh at you, but we all who know you better will feel quite sure of ultimate success. That this will be so I doubt not, and every check you receive - and afterwards will triumph over - I look on only as so many noble chapters to show the merit of your victories. As a poet you might only be recognised in after years, but as an orator and an honest man, I am quite sure you will be soon.

Ever your truly affe brother

R.H. Gurney.

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In Archer's letter, towards the close, the hope is expressed that Mr Ferrand - then exercising a potent influence in the North - might approve of his Protectionist candidature for the West Riding. This was on the supposition

that no other Protectionist candidate would be forthcoming. Mr Ferrand, in effect, promised to meet Gurney at a preliminary meeting of the party at Wakefield -, a promise which he failed to fulfil, possibly for fair and sufficient reasons. It was a desperate venture if you will, and as presumptuous as you please, but its justification was that no other candidate prepared to support protection had appeared in the field, and there was no time to be lost. Such a candidate however was to turn up at the eleventh hour. At the private preliminary meeting Gurney explained to the representatives of the Yorkshire Press, and to a few other persons, that he was prepared to fight on principle the battle of protection, in the absence of a more approved candidate; but that, should such a candidate appear, he would immediately retire in his favour. He also made it clear that it was out of his power to contest the great West Riding unless the party were prepared to carry him through free of expense. His spirited address had already appeared at this time in the Yorkshire papers, and he had printed an Election Song besides. Would that I could find that song! In its absence, may I cite some lines of my brother's written about that time with a telling burden enough?

*Ditty of the Unenlightened*

Oh I'm illiberal,
Yes most illiberal,
Fearfully, horribly, damnably illiberal.

I do not think the working man
Finds much more peace and plenty
Because for tenpence work he can
Where work he could for twenty.
I do profess to hold Calack!
That such a fool should be,

That starving won't bring plenty back,
Nor want prosperity.

Yes, I'm illiberal,
Oh most illiberal,
Wretchedly, horribly, shockingly illiberal!

I dream the poor man won't get more
By continental wages, -
I would not have us starve the poor
In this most learn'd of ages.
I think we scarce need drain their blood,
Nor cut our throats to prove
How much we wish our neighbours' good
And claim their foreign love.
Oh I'm illiberal,
Yes most illiberal,
Dirtily, shabbily, stupidly illiberal!

I dare to think that bringing in
French silks and barley Russian,
Will only ease us of our tin,
And make us look - blue prussian.
And to confess I'm not afraid
That I should deem it meet
If ladies more for satin paid
And men had bread to eat.
Oh I'm illiberal,
Yes most Illiberal,
Wilfully, woefully, dreadfully illiberal!

I know that these will seem to all
Most sad old-fashioned notions,
That men free trade salvation call,
And drink the Doctor's potions;
For me, I may be very blind,
There must be stupid men!
But something whispers in my mind,
Twice two does not make ten!
But I'm illiberal
Yes most illiberal,
Signally, wondrously, laughably Illiberal!

In short, to sum up all in all,
I dare to think and say
When glows on high, the sun's bright ball,
That 'tis not night but day.
And so with such old fashioned view
Of things above, below me,
I dare to sing as prompts the muse,
Disgusting all that know me.
Yes, I'm illiberal,
Oh most illiberal,
Fearfully, horridly, shabbily, stupidly woefully, shockingly, damnably illiberal.

Whilst at Wakefield Gurney put up at the Strafford Arms Hotel where many persons called on him, some of whom were men of weight; but all suspense was quickly put an end to by a letter from Mr Ferrand to Gurney announcing the candidature of an influential local protectionist Mr George Lane Fox. There had been a little fun going on which Archer enjoyed in spite of some of it being at his own expense. A Radical Paper of the West

Riding wrote that ‘he should be stuffed for a Protectionist mummy together with Ferrand’, and continued ‘This gentleman appears to be coming all the way from Devon to teach us political economy, but he will find us too far North for him, &c.’ The Yorkshire Tory Papers, on the other hand, gave him their friendly support; and Archer was tickled at being shewn the proof of a highly laudatory article about himself, whence presently his name was removed to make place, ‘mutatis mutandis’ for that of Mr Fox. For, naturally, aIl was up as soon as Mr Ferrand’s letter came to hand. Hereupon my brother’s slender hopes of a political career were extinguished at once and for ever, and he presently returned to Town bringing back with him expressions of good will from friends and foes. Battle ardours were not however extinct, since on his way home he stopped in Leeds and addressed a courteous challenge to the Anti-Corn Law Association to meet him for the public discussion of their differences, offering to defray all expenses. To his regret the challenge was declined, whereupon it was published in the local papers. At this time his temper was bright though hasty, and that which it never quite ceased to be, hopeful. He remained true to the principle of protection through life - speaking at a protectionist meeting in Oxford within a month of his end.

Here let me quote a verse or two from my brother’s

*England. Part the Second.*

And one stupendous error, baring gain,
A nation’s gain, on competition’s law,
Seeking for cheapness’ goal by stress and strain,
Misled by sophists, free from patriot awe,
Who life, toil, man, in speculation’s man
Consent alike to bury, fool’d you, curs’d
By Adam Smiths and dreamers, like to draw

My nation to perdition - I, the first,
In verse denounce thy plague, the latest born and worst.
Now, far and wide, rich vales uncultured lie
Our peasants cease to be. The swarms must flock
To towns, or cross the waves to foreign sky.
And who shall front the hot temperatures shock
Of foes? Our landed interest was the rock
In danger's hour. Tis now a waste of woe.
Wake, England, wake, nor let pride's folly block
Repentance' path! Must blindness crush thee? No.
On labour base thy weal; so toil, so gain, so grow!

I ought to add that after all the free trade candidate, Lord Morpeth, was allowed to walk over the course - Mr Fox retiring at the eleventh hour. A deputation appealed to Gurney to return, but it was too late. I suppose few things have been more mismanaged. Here is Gurney's final communication.

4 Stanhope St. Regent's Park.
7 February 1846

*To the Electors of the West Riding*

Gentlemen,

At the eleventh hour, when Mr Fox had unhappily resigned his position as candidate, a deputation most kindly sought me to request my fulfilment of my original pledge. Unfortunately, under the full impression that Mr Fox would and must be the Conservative candidate I had already retired from the field and returned to London. Deeply do I now regret that my delusion should have been so complete. Cordially do I thank the deputation who thus honoured me, and the Yorkshiremen they represented, for the active

decision and high feeling manifested by them upon this occasion. With a little more of union and good will, the election might indubitably have been won. As it is, Lord Morpeth can only be considered to sit by courtesy and sufferance.

Archer Gurney.

———

This is but a slight account which I have given of Archer Gurney's political knight-errantry, but I think it would have been a mistake to pass it over in silence. I question if he would have made a statesman - he may have been too impetuous for that - unless indeed he had learn prudence in that splendid school, before go many bad boys joined it, the House of Commons. If I err not, he might have proved himself a 'beau sabreur', a ~~ready~~ debater full of dash and gallantry, and an initiator of patriotic measures. That he would have done his best for protection goes without saying. This is what he once wrote to me nearly ten years later: 'You are right: - I should never have been a great politician, because I lack the genius for detail, and hate drudgery. This faculty is not to be acquired. But a man may take sound views as to great questions, without being a practical statesman.' Do I think then that the failure of that brief Yorkshire campaign is to be regretted - seeing what changes might have attended on success? I don't know. No doubt it will be expected of me that I should affirm all to have been for the best. But I am conscious that a politician may serve God and man as well as the most devoted priest. Was there not a Sir Stafford Northcote, a Lord Iddesleigh? As it was, all was well, but the other way all would have been well too. And herewith I leave a curious little episode behind me.

For convenience sake, and as forming a sequel to the Yorkshire venture, I shall make mention here of a political Satire of my brother's called

*Humbug*, though it was only published in the following year, 1847. The publisher was Graham of the High Street, Oxford. In this satire the vials of the author's political wrath were emptied inter alia upon free trade. The first edition sold off rapidly, but it was not followed by a second. I quote a few lines from what was all strong and pointed.

What is the wisdom of these modern days?
Good things to blame and evil things to praise.
And what the valour which the age commands?
To cringe to foeman and to kick our friends.
And what the principle we liberal call?
Why faith to boast no principle at all.
Enlightened century which deems aright true
That wholly false to be our fathers knew.
And thence of course conclusion sage must draw
Whate'er was lawless then should now be law.
Thy statesman like thyself enlightened grown,
At other's 'rattings' smile, and boast their own:
'Dull bigotry alone can hold its way
And not the current of the times obey.
Such obstinate perversion works disgust;
Expediency commands, and yield we must.'

Expediency - O talisman divine!
Men's vows may chide thee, but their votes are thine -
An airy harlequin of dubious hue
What wondrous changes thou canst bring to view.
Thou wav'st thy wand, and lo! 'neath magic's gleams
The Union Workhouse as a palace beams,
Conservatives in liberal vizards glory,
And what was erst dubbed Whig is now high Tory.

O age of wonders, all thy skill and power
Have proved at last one favored mortal's dower.
Thy valour, wisdom, principle, ability,
Have centred in one Prince of versatility.
Why trifle more? Would we that name conceal,
Enlightenment should rise and thunder Peel.

———

And now for a sadder subject. For good reasons our hold on Rock Vale became loosened in 1846, though we did not finally leave it before 1847. My mother was averse to staying on at Rock Vale, whilst her eldest son was absent in Town, following up as yet however languidly the legal profession. For though devoted to literature he had not quite neglected legal work; indeed, he appeared as Junior Counsel in two unimportant cases. Then too, I had just become a member of Lincoln Coll. Oxford. And to crown all there was the prospect of Richard going out to India. Here my memory is at fault. Can he have been going out straight to India? or was he about to enter Haileybury? Be this as it may, the family went to Town in the Spring of 1846. One visit Dick paid to me at Oxford. I was almost a freshman, and consequently - not being a public school man - my circle of acquaintance was restricted; but it is with pleasure still that I recall the impression he made on the few men I knew. He much enjoyed that glimpse of Oxford life. Suddenly, soon after his return to Town, he caught a desperate ~~cold on~~ chill which settled on his lungs. - Galloping consumption set in, and to quote our mother's words 'his sweet spirit passed away' on June 11, 1846, at the age of 16. The valley of the shadow of death can have rarely appeared less gloomy than it did during Richard's last illness. He understood the pass to which he was brought, and faced it smilingly. But for us his death was hard to bear. All his mother's tender nursing, all her little motherly ambition, to end - thus! and that just as he was about to leave the home nest! And yet, truly, it was a mercy he had not taken wing! Archer loved him dearly; and

to me he had been an almost lifelong companion. I wonder, was old Jack, the Tregony gardener, (see Ch. II) his childhood's friend, present to welcome him on the other side among yet dearer ones? Waking up from a short nap just before the end he told us he had seen in letters of gold these words which are engraved upon his tombstone in Kensal Green - '*The Way Home*.'

Feeling a need for change after the deep tension and anxiety we had undergone in the sick room, our mother suggested a tour in the lake district, to be followed by a visit to Edinburgh, and Archer and I gladly fell in with her suggestion. Naming our lost one often, we bore him in our hearts which slowly healed as almost all hearts heal in time by God's appointment.

# Chapter XXII
# The Lake District. Wordsworth. Songs of the Lakes.
# 1846

We left London en route for the English lakes on July 16th 1846, the day following on my brother's twenty-sixth birthday, and first we betook ourselves to Bowness on Lake Windermere, where ~~lived our~~ we found our kind friends, dating from Wiesbaden days, the Gibsons. I am not about to relate our pleasant wanderings in detail, though I could easily do so, for my diary makes mention of the beauty of each lake in turn, and even tells of the potted char and of the famous breakfasts which were forthcoming at ~~even~~ the remotest mountain Inns. We made our longest stay at Ambleside at the head of Lake Windermere, and moved from place to place in a cart. We were apprehensive lest our acquaintance with Switzerland and the Tyrol might spoil us for the pretty English lakes and hills; but never was apprehension more unfounded. On the contrary, the faculty of admiration had only been kindled in us by the glories of Continental scenery, and we were enchanted with all that we saw of the English lake district. The days were mostly half rain and half sunshine, but the soil quickly dried. A charm was added to our tour by Archer's verses, which flowed forth ~~in connection with~~ at the sight of tarn or mountain as spontaneously as the waterfalls. We spent exactly a month in the lake district, to Archer a month of literary labour -, say rather of congenial literary play, for the pain and trouble to him would have been to forbear from writing. His Lake Songs have never been published, so I shall interweave a few of them with my slender narrative, and I may fairly quote at once the playful lines on Lake Windermere or Wirandermere, dating from Bowness. The Songs show the influence of the Germanic spirit, as people who know German ballads and lyrics will discover for themselves.

Song

*A Lover's Whims. Dramatic*

Dear Lake Winandermere,
Why not - why art thou dear?
Thus sighs the Breeze:
'For that my azure breast
Wooes thee to gentlest rest,
When thou hast wandered far over fierce tossing Seas.'

Dear Lake Winandermere,
Why art - why art thou dear?
Thus asks the Shore:
'For that my mirror fair
Gives back thy beauties rare
Adding through softened shade full many a beauty more.'

Dear Lake Winandermere,
Why art - why art thou dear?
Thus breathe I too:
'For that my shore beside
Thou woo'dst and won'st thy bride,
O whilst I prompt her love - is not thy love my due?'

~~And now here let me quote a letter &c. as poetical to my mind a little poem in preses received when we were at Bowness~~.

~~It was~~ Whilst we were at Bowness our mother received a very and engaging letter from an Irish ~~serva~~ girl who had lately left her service. She was one of

three sisters who had all been or were to be our mother's maids; and three more faithful and affectionate creatures could not be found. They were devout Roman Catholics.

Here is the letter:

'The very morning I left you a Lady came heer and ingaged me. She livs in the Square at hide park gardens. I am going on tomorrow and my heat is breaking. I feer I will never meet any Ladys like you or Mrs Burnet, sow kindhearted and gintel. I told the Lady the throoth that the two ladys I had bin with was too indulgant to me; that she need not think but I would make plenty of mistakes as I am to atend tabel when there is company, but not at any other time. I ofen think of the morning, I was going to coot the string that was on the ham, and if you recollect, you said that was Irish all over, and maid me take my time and open it; but next morning you were not by and I whped it open with the nife before I knew what I done, but I was contented when l found I had another cord, and the rachers coet, and the ham tied up, while I was opening the cord the morning before. I taught at the first moment that I would never become a cool determand thinking English girl, but the other taught consoled me that I would be quick in seting right what I would do rong. Now I will lern to be a good girl in 3 or 4 months, again you come back to town, and go to you if you have me. I told the Lady how if you would have me I would like to go back, but she said if she Iikes me she would not agree to that, but you know I will come away to you if she does not let me go free, as I would not care a pinefor what she would do on me. But something mite enterfair in our family that Kate Ellen and I would be cauled home like the Jews. If we are, if yous would ever come visite Ireland I would hope to see yous; but now-mater what our fait may be or what part of the world I will be in, I will always remember you and Mrs Burnet with the deepest heart-felt gratitude. I remain my dear lady by youshing you all the hapiness this changable world can afford and a

everlasting crown thereafter. May God bless you. I do remember you in my unworthy prayers everyday.

*Mary Byrne*.'

It was on Wednesday the 19th of July 1846 (I am pleased to give an exact date when able to do so) whilst we were staying at Ambleside, that a great honour and happiness befell us. We had an interview with Wordsworth, and this is how it happened. We had visited Rydal Park, where lived Lady le Fleming, for the sake of its two beautiful waterfalls, and on leaving her grounds we had but to cross the road to reach the gate of Rydal Mount, the poet's house. We grieved that Archer had not procured a letter of introduction as he might easily have done; but the guide book had told us that people occasionally obtained permission to see the view from the poet's garden, so we passed within the gate and came at once upon a very nice-looking old lady superintending the cutting of some ivy which was too luxuriant. This was Mrs Wordsworth, of whom her husband had written ~~beautifully~~

'She was a phantom of delight'

and she most graciously assented to our walking through the grounds. We had to pass through the kitchen-garden in order to reach anything like a point of view; and there, ensconced among his raspberry-canes, feasting on the fruit, stood an old gentleman in a high-crowned straw hat - then as I believe 76 years old and looking quite his age. Not very well knowing what to do or where to go next, Archer approached the old gentleman in his stronghold. He began in as polite a manner as possible by saying that a lady had given us permission to walk round that way, and added 'we don't exactly know where to find the view.' Wordsworth's reply, made at intervals in a deep gruff tone, ran as follows: 'I don't know Sir; I can't tell you Sir; I

know of no remarkable view about here - there may be however; you may see the same view from any field in the neighbourhood' (the literal fact). But he finished by saying, 'You may go through that gate if you choose, and walk along that meadow.' This was not very promising; but, to make a long story short, we were joined presently by the poet - perhaps a little remorseful at his want of politeness; even now however he stood with his back to us, only giving short looks round from time to time, whilst commenting on features of the landscape, and congratulating us on the day, which he said was particularly good for lake scenery. Our mother said something appreciative about the view and this he seemed to take in good part, but was still grumpy. We asked if we might follow a path we saw down the meadow which would prevent the necessity of our intruding upon his garden again? 'That,' he replied, 'is a private path, and belongs to the gentleman whose house you see below.' Our mother here shamed him of the straw hat into good nature by an adroit half ironical compliment: 'And he perhaps' said she most unblushingly, 'is not so kind as yourself in admitting strangers to his Grounds?' The poet now turned to us, and looking quite amiable replied 'Oh! he could not say that, but as the gentleman was from home, he did not wish to send anyone through his grounds.' Hereupon we began retracing our steps at a snail's pace through the garden, Wordsworth escorting us in a very amicable manner. He informed us that the scenery of the lakes was superior to anything in the world, and denounced the enormity of a scheme for bringing a railway right through the grounds of his neighbour, lady Le Fleming, adding, with a little excitement, 'They had better rush into the lakes at once!' Our mother expressed her very real horror at the idea of that beautiful country - being so disfigured. Our sympathy had evidently won upon the poet, for he now made dead pauses as if fearful of losing us too soon. Presently he pointed out to us an 'avenue' of holly-hocks, 'an idea which had been copied on account of its beautiful effect' - and he looked at our mother as if to suggest that he had thrown out a hint for her benefit. Upon this she informed him that at Rock Vale, on the

seacoast of south Devon, where she lived, hollyhocks did not thrive. He was now curious to know exactly where Rock Vale was, and on learning that it was near Dartmouth became yet more interested as he said he had been there.

Our mother who knew Wordsworth chiefly as the author of ‘We are Seven’ was quite at her ease with him, and it was plain that her bright and natural manner had inspired him with confidence; but Archer was just a little shocked at what he considered her want of reverence, and it was with a very sincere respect that he now cut into the conversation: ‘People’, he said ‘connected the scenery around Rydal Mount with such charming associations - such a magic spell had been thrown over it - by him of the straw hat - ‘that it doubly won upon the heart.’ This truthful sally was received with a benevolent smile. He, Archer, only feared that the poet must be sadly intruded on ‘by people who came rather to see him than any scenery however beautiful.’ That too won a smile, and this further response in a jocular tone: ‘No, strangers don’t annoy me; they leave me alone, and so do I them.’ This ~~near~~ approach to a joke tickled its author, and we laughed with him. Archer also told him that he was about to publish his King Charles I, and begged his acceptance of a copy when out, adding that the book was dedicated to the memory of the Church’s Royal Martyr. ‘Poor fellow!’, exclaimed Wordsworth, and then went on ‘I shall be very happy if it will give you pleasure.’ He then wished to know what the nature of the forthcoming book was, and on learning that it was a Dramatic Poem asked Archer for his name, and when told repeated it several times aloud as if to impress it on his memory. Not for another three or four months was the poem to be published. How vexatious was it that my brother could not present it then and there. I suppose the poem was duly sent to Wordsworth when published, but I cannot answer for it, neither do I remember any comment that Wordsworth may have made. We had now reached the front of the house, which the poet kindly pressed us to enter; but our mother

thought we had intruded sufficiently, and would not go in. Just then a tall gentlemanly looking man, of about 30, with the large Wordsworth features, entered at the gate whom the poet introduced to us with some pride as his youngest son. ‘A fine looking fellow - isn’t he?’ exclaimed Strawhat with paternal pride adding ‘Like a Tyrolese, like a Tyrolese.’ The Wordsworths, father and son, still detained us for several minutes chatting, and it was with some little difficulty that we could get away.

~~I may I write on the simple plan of interesting myself. Does any reader say ‘A better plan would be to interest other people?’. I venture to answer that the two plans ought to be compatible. Certainly no great good could ensue from an author writing that which did not interest himself! My readers little know how much many details I spare them in connection with this little tour~~.

No other event of ~~equa~~l equalling in interest our visit to Wordsworth could befall us in the lake country, for alas Southey was dead! At Keswick we could only see his tomb. And even if our visit to the lakes had been timed at a somewhat earlier period, Southey’s mind - as is well known - had broken down for several years before his end, owing, it is supposed, to the immense strain of his ~~restless~~ literary labours at a time when for 30 consecutive nights ~~were devoted by him~~ he watched by the bedside of his dying wife.

On our return that day to Ambleside Archer was inspired to write the following lines, which were soon in the poet’s hands.

*To Wordsworth*

A lay to thee who thousand lays
Hast sung to God and Nature’s praise!

‘Twere scarce an easy duty
A fitting tribute to present:
And after all, when words are spent,
What words can honour beauty?
The selfsame doubts I erst did feel,
When strove I vainly to reveal the gladness and the pleasure
With which this land of lake and rill
My soul impress’d, these feel I still,
When thou should’st prompt the measure.

The tears we shed o’er genius page,
The sympathetic love or rage
With which his words inspire us
The Poet’s fittest homage are:
We feel the glory of the Star,
Though scarce its beams may fire us.

Thus kindling ne’er to wordy breath,
We trace thy lays of love or death,
Of triumph or of sorrow:
And by that inmost thrill divine
Which seals the lyre of genius thine
We hail thee, night and morrow.

Not sudden bursts of wonder, no,
Continuous inspiration’s flow,
Thou woo’st from each kind bosom:
Thy muse no gaudy tulip flow’r,
But nursed in Springtide’s sweetest hour,
And Springtide’s purest blossom.

So in thine honoured age, the rays
Of sunny love still crown thy days;
And on thy Rydal Water
Dame Nature opes her stores to thee
As if she loved thine own to be,
Since thou so long hast sought her.

What need I tell how nothing moved
By year or scoff thou aye hast proved
Thine England's true defender,
Her Church's ever faithful Son,
A champion who his goal hath won,
As wisely firm as tender.

Thou little need'st this lay of mine,
Yet take such tribute to thy shrine
Of high poetic merit!
The Past and present grace thy name;
And thou the Future hallowed fame
And rapture shaIt inherit!

It would in him have been strange and dull in him, if Archer had given no thought to Miss Martineau - then living near Ambleside - whose *Feats on the Fiords* and other writings he delighted in. He sent her the following ~~An~~ Appeal: ~~of which I will quote here the first and last verses: -~~

O, wert thou ours!
A noble heart is surely thine:
Thou bidst the lightsome glances shine
Of merry childhood, half divine:
Why bend'st thou at another shrine?

To other alien powers?

*last verse*

O yet, return! Hast wandered far,
O'er mountain paths, through deserts wide!
But, gleams on high the eastern star
That gladly back thy steps would guide,
Faith's star that breaks the clouds of pride.
The Mother's arms in eager quest
Are oped to woo thee back to rest:
She loved thee first, who loves thee best.
Know, faith to genius is allied:
Come, come! He lives for all who died.

*2nd verse*

Why own'st thou not that Saviour King
Who childhood bless'd, as nature's spring,
With hushed affection's welcoming?
And why the bond of union break?
And why the ancient Church forsake,
Which still for all would watch and wake?
By the sweet flowers,
The azure skies, the verdant hills,
The gentle and translucent rills
Around thee, by the breeze which thrills
In evening's golden hours,
By nature's wide communion - say!
Why dost thou coldly turn away?
Why wilt thou mind gainst mind arrays

And darken concord's holy day?
Come! Come! be ours.
We need thy graces and thy powers!

The longer we stayed at Ambleside, the more we were inclined to condone Wordsworth's daring dictum that the scenery of the English lakes is superior to anything in the world. The walks, the drives, were perfect. Let me mention a few of these in connection with Archer's poetical fancies.

One afternoon we started on foot for Loughrigg Tarn, a little lake about 3 miles from Ambleside on the Brathay Road. Several times we had to take shelter from the showers, but, at last out came the sun, and who so glad as we! I questioned a very ancient cottage dame as to the way, who in return questioned me. 'Is dat your Moder?' she began. 'Yes' I said. 'Ah', said the old dame, shading her eyes with her hand, 'I see, she is an elderly woman like myself!.' In so saying she did but add 40 or 50 years to our mother's age. She next asked, pointing to Archer, 'ls dat your fader?' 'No,' I rejoined, 'my broder.' But she made all good presently, for, on Archer asking the way in his turn, she said, nodding her head in the direction of our mother who had passed on, 'That girl will show you! she knows!.' And so we came laughing to the tiny mere. Loughrigg Tarn is a lovely piece of water, and is commonly called, from its pure and crystal nature, 'Diana's Looking-glass.' It is nearly surrounded by high and beautiful hills. I believe it is Sergeant Talford who goes into raptures about this sweet little Tarn. Here are Archer's ~~inspirations.~~ verses.

*Loughrigg Tarn*

Diana's Looking Glass? - Ye err
To yield so strange a name as this:
We care not for her charms nor her,

Though Greek's might deem them not amiss.
Ours are more frank more buoyant times,
Her cold transgressions rouse our anger,
The maid who deemed mere glances crimes
Yet kissed Endymion into languor.
No, ours the tribe of merry frys,
And ours the lyre to sing their praise:
List then our lay whilst wine-cups pass
Of this, the Fairies' Looking Glass.

*Song*

At the midnight gladsome
Fairy rebecks sound,
At the midnight gladsome
Fairy dancers bound.
Odours, notes, and breezes
Speed o'er land and sea
For the joyous meeting
Loughrigg Tarn by thee.

Then they weave their circles
And their spells they cast
O'er the azure waters,
Midnights three to last.
Whatso mortal cometh
There resolved to be,
Shall behold his dearest,
Loughrigg Tarn, in thee.

If she frown upon him

Bliss may ne’er be his,
If a smile adorn her
Joy predestined is:
Speed then, anxious lovers,
Over land and sea,
All shall read their fortunes
Loughrigg Tarn, in thee.

Well - I hear the legend
Nor distrust its grace,
Yet the boon I seek not
Of the fairy race.
Wherefore? - O good fairies,
Ellen’s eyes I see:
They are surest prophets
To my love and me.

Archer made an interesting acquaintance whilst at Ambleside, that of Mr ~~Scarborough~~ Scarisbrick, the Kendal organist, a composer of some talent. To oblige Mr ~~Scarborough~~ Scarisbrick Archer wrote the words of a song for the opening of the Lancaster and Carlisle Railway, which Mr S. has set to music. Thus does the Song begin:

In the days of old Roma with wearisome toil
Men fashioned a highway for rapine and spoil,
Whence shooting afar to the Solway and Forth
Rome pour’d her legions to harass the North;
But other the praise which the present shall claim,
And our highway shall boast a far happier fame,
For the railroad whose glories we sing on this day
Shall bind our twin nations for ever and aye.

*Chorus*
The Railroad the Railroad the Giant-like line,
With the speed of the eagle all honor be thine.
&c.

A project was mooted between poet and composer for producing conjointly a series of '*Songs of the Lakes'*; but for some reason Mr Scarisbrick did not do his part. Archer wrote unflaggingly, and I suppose his Lake Songs and Poems would almost fill a small volume, though I fear, some are lost. Of the few in my possession I will add yet two or three. Of course, he did not fail to celebrate in verse Wordsworth's home lakelet,

*Rydal Water*

*Song*

Lovely Rydal Water
Like a monarch's daughter
Lie'st thou in thy beauty midst thy warrior train,
Cliffs around thee standing,
Whilst o'er all, commanding,
Soars thy royal father Loughrigg Fell his throne to gain.

Deem it not aggression
If I make confession
Of the wondrous legend elfin tatlers speak,
How a page so airy
Stirred thy love's vagary,
E'en the dashing Rothay River dared thy love to seek.

With patrician coldness
Thou didst mark his boldness
With aristocratic ‘sufferance’ sublime;
But he sang so sweetly
And he kiss’d so featly -
That at last - O fall appalling! thou did’st brook the crime.

Envious breezes fleeting
Told of that sweet meeting
And thy Royal Father - oh his wrath was fell.
Midnight’s shade was round him
And with clouds he crown’d him,
Hapless lovers never - never - may ye hope that wrath to quell.

But O lovely Water
Could he curse his daughter
When her glance appealing woke his sympathy?
Morning dawned in glory
Lifelong bliss before thee:
And the page the Princess wedded - Rydal, joy to thee!

Let me make room here, because I like the swing of the metre, for the opening verse of a ~~little~~ song on

*Coniston*

Coniston, Coniston, proudly thy mountain range
Towers In the distance blue, wooing our eyes to gaze:
Free as the skies of the South from aught misty haze,
Stand’st thou as ages could work thee nor harm our change:
The lake is below in its azure array,

The white clouds are smiling, like warriors at play,
The tall mountain peaks seem as freeborn as they:
Scene, worthy noblest lay!

Archer passed through the lake district as a youthful poet should do. The external glories by which he was surrounded called forth responsive gleams of beauty from within. He sang because he could not help singing.

I can only conjecture that Archer he did not print these Lake Songs with his other poems, because he hoped to publish them by themselves, unless indeed he held them too slight for publication. For aught I know he may have polished and improved them: I am quoting from the original versions. Here is what he wrote of Grasmere Lake, which is not far from Rydal Water.

*Grasmere*

*Song*

The Moon is up o'er sweet Grasmere
The skies are palely blue -
The stars as thrilled by hope and fear,
Are tinkling o'er and in the Mere:
I thrill with rapture too.
The Maid I love - she slumbers nigh
And this to know alone deem I
A knowledge pure as yonder sky.

Hark, Voices through the silent night!
Perchance my fancy strays -
But sighed not zephyr in his flight

‘l wander round and strive with might
On Ellen’s form to gaze -
But oh! her casement closed hath she,
And so that sight is lost to me.’
Zephyr, let me mourn with thee!
Hark, hark, yon lisping wavelet said
My gentle sister wave
Know’st thou why here so long delayed
My stand through midnight I have made?
Her mansion’s base I love.
See yonder stars! from yon blue sphere
Why shoot they down to linger here?
All - all - for thee - my Ellen dear!
And oh! if these be fancies fond
As I at morn may say,
Yet is there truth all these beyond
My soul is thine by love’s true bond,
And I am more than they.
One single human heart shall prove
A myriad senseless worlds above,
Whene’er that heart is let by love.

———

Only a short way beyond Grasmere is Thirlmere. ~~Otherwise known if I mistake not as Hawes Water~~. Differing from other lakes in ~~formation~~ shape, since it is divided into an upper and lower sheet of water, it is inferior in loveliness to none. Here two brothers and a sister, all young, and their agreeable old Aunt Betsy, were most kind. Their private boat was the only one on the lake, and they rowed us about in it. The young people were the sons and daughter of the Vicar of the parish, a Mr Bush, whose house they pointed out to us ~~on the lower reach of~~ overlooking the lake. ~~a Mr Bush~~ The

manners of the whole party showed ease and good breeding, and we were soon chatting like old acquaintances. We were pressed to return with them to the Vicarage to tea, but our mother would not intrude. ~~so far~~ Miss Bush was a lively nice-looking girl with a merry and always ready laugh, and the rest were equally nice. Their kindness gave us very great pleasure. And, by way of some ~~slight~~ return, Archer sent a Song on her favourite lake to the young lady, together with a few poetical lines addressed to ~~herself~~ her own self. ~~I have not space for them~~.

But in lieu of these I will quote some sterner lines, entitled

*An Angry Sonnet*

Oh shame of shames! O horror to record!
Here in this land of beauty, Drunkenness
Bequeaths a curse where nature seems to bless,
And stamps with vice the peasant and the lord:
Ay, some of highborn Iineage, who have stored
The memory of their sires, with pride's fierce excess
The inebriate wine-cup to their lips do press
And reel, by wisdom scorned, by Heaven abhored.
O vile Supreme of Folly: Shall this land,
Of all earth's realms the ~~lovliest~~ proudest last and wont
For drunken vice be styled? A Poet's son,
He too - but hush, my lyre! Let none demand
Such awful truth but bury deeds accurst
In deadly silence! - Song, thy goal is won.

Now let me mention Keswick. There we pitched one tent most happily for a week, but there we heard, as I think for the first time, and to Archer's ~~wild~~ enchantment, Mendelsohn's 'Songs without Words' ~~performed~~ played on

the piano by ~~some travelling~~ our friends Mr and Mrs Frost - he a Cambridge Don. Archer's love for music amounted to a passion; and the Frosts played Mendelsohn to him to his heart's content. It was at Keswick that Southey had lived and died, for whose poems Archer ever entertained a profound admiration. When at Keswick, Archer poured out his affection and admiration for Southey. ~~in two poems one of these entitled~~ Thus begins ~~Consolation. Begins thus~~ :

'Tis vain to pine or murmur now
O'er him who sleeps in gladness:
The wreath of light has decked his brow,
No child was he of sadness;
And in his Keswick's calm retreat
The hours swept by like breezes fleet,
So swift, and yet so gently sweet.
What vast and dazzling visions there
Have broadened on his soul!
Beauty from sky, lake, vale and air
His inmost spirit stole.
And glowing dreams of life and light,
Like shadows of the infinite,
Have flash'd upon his raptured sight.
Kehama's tale of pomp and power
And love that mocks at woe
Were like the tulip's gorgeous flower
Whose tints as sunbeams glow,
But ah! not soulless is the tale,
And therefore in its strain we hail
The richest rose that scents the gale.
&c. &c. &c.

We heard much about Southey that was interesting, and visited his empty house.

It seems that long after his intellect had broken down he would continue regularly to enter the library and there play with the books which he could no longer read. Southey is mentioned with affectionate regret by all who knew him. Let me end this chapter by quoting my brother's lines on Southey's lake, Derwent Water, on whose shore Keswick stands.

*Derwent Water*

*Ballad*

By the wide, bright Dervent Water
The drying monarch lay:
He had waged a strife full glorious
With the Dane and his host that day;
But the battle is not to the bravest man,
And his soul ebbs fast away.

O'er the Catsbells' glooming,
The Danish Standard came.
Then rose King Owen frowning,
And eyed them with eyes of flame:
But their legions ever onward poured,
And their trumpets blew for fame.

King Owen's sword is shining;
Gainst a rock hath he ta'en his stand;
His head still proudly seareth,
And clenched is his strong right hand:
But his royal soul hath passed away,

And Kingless is Cumberland.
'Know ye yon stark stiff warrior?'
The Royal Dane, he said:
'Oh, ours is this land of beauty!
King Owen's soul hath fled!'
Then the Danish legions a low prayer breathed,
And their Standards droop'd o'er the Dead.

~~I cannot spare space to write of our visit to Edinburgh, except to say that we there met by appointment our mother's favourite niece, Mrs Burnett, born Emily Wooldridge, who had returned from India for some months on sick leave, and that we were most happy there~~.

I trust I have done my brother's memory no wrong by printing, in this chapter, some few of those absolutely unlaboured, playful, and romantic '*Songs of the Lakes*' - to which - when once written - he never appears to have given another thought. At this time everything turned to poetry under his hands. He was like a rose tree ablaze with blossoms, and it is like that some buds might have been best thinned out to make the others perfect.

From the English lakes we proceeded to Edinburgh, where our mother's favourite niece Mrs Burnett, spent several weeks with us. Edinburgh ever formed for us a delightful memory; but I forbear from dwelling on it, since inclination only, not duty, prompts me to do. Our return to London was marked by the publication of *King Charles the First*.

# Chapter XXIII
# ~~Friends of youth~~. Early friendships. Howard Glover and Attila. Sims Reeves. Ernest Jones and the Chartist scare. 1847-1848

Archer Gurney wrote at this time several Opera libretti, and among these a slight Comic Opera entitled *Aminta or the Coquette*, composed by Howard Glover, which was badly put on the stage at the Princess's Theatre under the management of Mr Maddox. A more ambitious ~~work of my brother's~~ libretto was a grand *Attila*, which Howard Glover had set finely to music, but it never was represented on any stage. In the hope that it might gain a hearing in Germany ~~Archer~~ its author wrote a spirited German version. He also wrote a French version which I believe to have merit. Great happiness was his in hearing Glover's setting of this Opera. One day the librettist played his friend the composer a trick. Glover was seated at his piano seeking an inspiration for some aria or movement, with ~~Archer~~ the librettist by his side, when the latter who had set the passage to music of his own hummed the melody as though Glover had just originated it. In another moment Glover said 'I have it', and reproduced in all innocence no doubt with musicianly embellishments, the melody Archer Gurney had just hummed. The secret was never divulged. I may mention that melodies came to my brother at will, but he had no knowledge of thorough bass. Glover was for many years the musical critic of the *Morning Post*, - his night-duties unfitting him it is likely for much daywork, since his musical articles had to be written in the small hours. The so-called Pyne-Harrison Company brought out later an Opera of Glover's, *Ruy Blas*, of which music and libretto were alike his own. It enjoyed a succés d'estime, but alas little more. The one musical triumph of Howard Glover's life was his Cantata *Tam-O-Shanter*, full of glorious revelry and devilry, a romantic inspiration

of high order, Then the ball of fortune seemed to lie at his feet, but unaccountably he did not follow up his success at once; and presently, attracted by the prospect of an opening for his talents, he left this country for New York, where, as I have understood, he became chef d'orchestre, and soon died. His was a well-known personality in London, and he was of a fine presence in spite of an early accident whereby one eye was rendered unduly prominent. His beautiful *Songs of Many Lands*, published by C. Jefferys, and his lovely setting of Shelley's *Indian Serenade*, 'I arise from dreams of thee', ought alone to have secured for him fame and competence; but young ladies of that day - whatever may be the case now - could not play his musicianly accompaniments. He was witty and agreeable with a dash of bitterness and my brother had for him a sincere affection as well as admiration, and grieved not lightly over his premature death and comparative failure in life. ~~My brother's~~ Gurney's verdict respecting the friend of his youth was probably sound, and was to the effect that Glover possessed several qualities of a great composer, a strong vein of melody, imagination, grace, power, knowledge and dramatic fire - but was wanting in perseverance, being unable or unwilling to face severe and continuous application. Let his trying nightwork be borne in mind, say I! Still, it is fair to ask, would our great living composer, Arthur Sullivan, be so famous as he deservedly is, if together with all other needful qualities he did not possess this last quality also - the capacity for hard work?

Here shall follow a youthful letter of Howard Glover's, which though long will scarcely I think be found too long by lovers of art. The letter treats of *Attila* with which composer and librettist seem to have taken any amount of pains.

Francfort A/M. 31st October 1842

My dear Gurney

What shall be said to thee ‘in all the prodigality of praise’ for thy most beautiful translations? In what words shall I thank thee for all the trouble thou hast already taken in my behalf? This time not even a word of censure, not even a suggestion! This time the pundits are all in raptures. In fact they go so far as to pronounce some parts of your 1st Act of *Attila* to be worthy of Goethe!! What say you to that? The lines for the Maidens’ Chorus beginning ‘Flichtet die Myrte in Locken von Gold’ (‘Twine we the myrtle through the hair’) and Ildefonsa’s aria ‘Iugend! welk sind deine Rosen’ (‘Soon must droop each springtide blossom’), are particularly admired. Your translations of Shelley are not less lauded; especially by those who understand English and can appreciate the difficulty of rendering the Shelleyan metre and spirit in any foreign language. The carrying out of the rhymes in ‘Wie der Somer eilig flieht’ has been much noticed both on account of its difficulty and the admirable way in which you have managed to overcome it. To all this I have to add that I have tried the whole of the translations through with the music, and find them admirably adapted to it. My impression is that you could not have succeeded better.

Now to account for my delay in answering your glorious letter which (par parenthése) I mean to keep as a curiosity - a monument of learning, genius, and friendship. The fact is then that since I last wrote to you I have talked much about our Opera with persons high in office In the Theatre here; whose opinions I respect, whose influence may be of use to us. I have laid before them the three versions of *Attila*, and their choice falls unanimously, enthusiastically, upon the first! The two others they consider insipid and commonplace (contain your fury a little longer:) the first grand, terrible, and new. And as the new and terrible are the order of the day now throughout the continent they think that we could not do better than adopt that in preference to the others!

What say you?

It is unquestionable that horrors of all description are the mode throughout the continent. Paris sets the example. Witness *The Pest in Florence, Lucrezia Borgia, Caterina Cornaro*, and though last not least *The Huguenots, Robert le Diable,* &c. &c. Like the diseased gourmand who must be lured to his unhealthy meal by hot spices, fiery wines, piquante sauces, so must the public of the present day be lured to the Theatre by the wild, the extraordinary, the terrible, that it be new it matters not. This is certainly to be regretted. 'True tis pity, and pity 'tis true', but as the Germans say 'es ist ein mal so', and it not for us 'tyroo' to attempt to stem the tide of popular inclination.

At least - not yet. For mine own poor part I must confess that I think still (as I have thought from the beginning) the first version of *Attila* to me be very - very much the best: but the tremendous opposition it met with from the wise acres in England, and the time lost in the negotiations on the subject, induced me to consent however unwillingly - to any alteration likely to get it brought out. My opinion also in the matter wanted support. My Mother (Mrs Glover of the Haymarket Theatre) herself considered the 1st version too terrible, and but ill adapted to the English stage. You too, you may remember, had your doubts. But still, notwithstanding all this, my impression and secret conviction all along has been that if either were ever brought out it would be the first. You must remember that we are now writing for a German, not an English public. The people here like stirring incidents, strong emotions, mystery, horrors, development of dark and gloomy passions; and where will they find them in any lyric Tragedy if not in the 1st version of *Attila*? Besides (as you told me) you took your idea of the heroine from a poem by the German poet Werner, and you yourself have, you will allow, strongly Teutonic tendencies. The original

Ildefonsa is then we may say a German creation, and may well be more ‘an-sprechend’ to a German public than she of the 2nd and 3rd versions who has certainly (passez moi le mot) something of the lack-a-daisy and Planché - Charles Matthew-ical school about her - at least compared with the other. It smells in fact a little of the Covent Garden Opera lamp of adaptation - Kurz ‘une piéce de circonstance.’ I say this of course without the slightest idea of detracting from the clever way in which you brought the alterations about, or from the ‘bonne volonté’ with which you undertook to do the thing. It is merely a verification of your own principle that an alteration can never be as good as a first inspiration. In the altered version somehow the poetry seems gone. Where is the grand and terrible Ildefonsa of the 1st version? She who follows the murderer of her father and her lover through the world to work a dreadful retribution upon him, who sacrifices him to their ‘manes’ in his hour of joy and triumph when Rome lies torn and bleeding at his feet - ay - even at the nuptial altar? There a terrible sublimity in the character of Ildefonsa which can hardly be parallel’d in the whole range of dramatic literature. Then there is the mysterious poetry of the Maiden’s choruses, against which the character of Ildefonsa stands out in such bold relief? Where are the gloomy forebodings of the Druids during the concluding scenes of the Opera? These effects which for me possess an indescribable poetry in themselves, are now lost. In the second version they are meaningless. And the charming contrast between the characters of Honoria the Roman maiden and the blightest, abandoned, and reckless Ildefonsa, is gone. Should you agree with me, you will I hope lose no time in forwarding the continuation of the translation. Another advantage which the 1st version possesses is that the music is all composed for it, which with the other not the case. I could have it ready for representation in a very short time. In fine in the 1st version there is poetical and historical justice. In the 2nd very little of either. Attila

ought to die - he must die - in short it is historical fact that he did die on his bridal night, although, it be not known by what means or from what cause. In our second version we do astonish him a little, 'transfix him with horror', or something of that kind. That is not enough. Now I fear that all this will give you an awful deal of trouble - and chiefly the alterations you will have to make in what you have already done. Remember that the decision rests with you.

To turn speak of music. I feel now, to tell you the truth, a necessity to write - that is - I hardly ever touch an instrument or take a walk in the country without inventing something in the musical way, and I feel that this creative disposition ought to be taken advantage of. Who knows how long it may last? When the poetry of a man's life is over, the poetry of his genius seldom lags long behind it. What do you think of this queer world? I am beginning to hate it. I have turned rather religious lately and have been composing some sacred things which the people here say they like. What do you say to an Oratorio by and bye? Perhaps we might succeed better with that in England than with an *Attila*! Nous verrons.

The criticism of the Westminster Review man on your *Faust* is very entertaining, particularly his friendly advice to you 'to take a few lessons in German.' I hope you will manage to send me the rest of it. The people here are delighted.

Ever sincerely Yours
Howard Glover.

---

A few extracts from *Attila*, the 1st version, shall follow here. The extracts will be lyrical, but since they are also dramatic they must needs suffer by

separation from the context.

*Chorus of Burgundian Maidens*
(surrounding the Princess Ildefonsa who stands leaning on a spear in reverie)

———

O, dark thy brow and wild thine eyes,
Like flaming orbs they gleam;
A misty cloud around thee flies,
Thy life is a troubled dream
A dark sad dream.
Canst thou not call to mind the days
When thou wert blithe as fair,
When the courtly minstrel tuned his lays
In praise of thy flowing hair,
When in thy father's halls
Our own dear land, we maidens strayed,
And laughing roamed the flowery glade?
Minds't thou the chant of other days
Which still the thought of home recalls?
O listen, listen, to that chant of happier days!

Twine we the myrtle through the hair,
Fresh roses and violets bring,
For life is so sweet and this earth is so fair,
And youth is the season of Spring.
Are not the roses, each rose on her bough,
With dew drops laden?
Ah, start not, if valour should woo thee now,
Sweet maiden!

A question having arisen as to whether some Roman prisoners shall be put to death or spared, the Princess Ildefonsa is made the arbitress of their fate.

*Concerted Piece*

*Ildefonsa*
They have sinned!

*Attila*
Ye have sinned, and must die,
Your faith is broken.

*Marcus*
They have bled!

*Burgundian Maidens*
They must bleed, though we sigh -
The King hath spoken.

*Retur*
They will rise!

*Priests*
They may soar to the sky
No spirits may dwell in the regions on high

*All*
But they must die
The King hath spoken
Their faith is broken.

*Bridal Chorus of Burgundian Maidens in honor of the Princess Ildefonsa*

We plait the ruby coronal
For our royal mistress' hair,
Through the flowing tresses that round them fall
Shall shine those gems so rare.
O, diamonds are bright,
And the emerald's light
So dazzling for mortal eyes to bear,
But bloodred rubies more richly glare,
Red rubies more richly glare.

*Bridal chorus renewed*
We sought throughout the orange grove
For flowers that might deck the bride,
Where the azure heaven laughs above
And the rivulets playful glide.
But the white and the gold
For her brow were too cold,
And her beauty to one sole hue's allied;
So bloodred roses shall deck the bride,
Red roses shall deck the bride.

*Chorus of Hunnish Priests Druids*
Woe, woe, woe,
Attila, Attila,
Dimly our torches glow
Coldly the breezes blow
Hark to our sighs of woe,

Attila, Attila, Attila!

*Warriors*
Attila,
Sheathed be now the sword!
We hail thee Roma lord.
Low the Roman eagles lie
And the vulture soars on high.
Where the sun's rays gleam
Where the snow storms stream,
In every clime dost thou rule supreme,
Attila!

*Beginning of Concerted Piece*
*The Emperor Valentinian*
Feast and sing,
Drive away the thought of sorrow,
Dance today and die tomorrow,
Hark, the joy-bells ring,
Flow'rs and smiles around ye fling.

*Chorus of Christian Monks*
Rome, how art thou fallen,
Fallen from thy high estate,
Thou from whom all pow'r had birth,
Thou, the ruler of the earth,
Rome, thou hast been great.
And thy lofty walls
And thy palace halls
Soon shall prove the vulture's home.
Rome!

Thou hast been great!
Bend in dust and ashes low.
Prayer and fast avert the woe:
Woe! Woe!

~~*Valentinian (seizing a winecup)*~~
~~Bacchus, lord of mirth and wine,~~
~~Be my master, I implore thee,~~
~~Who counts~~

*Valentinian*
Be your lips nor pale nor cold,
Dearly shall our lives be sold;
But our feast no languor know,
Though the world were Roma's foe.
Feast and sing!
Drive away the thought of sorrow!
Dance today and die tomorrow!
Let the joy-bells ring,
Flow'rs and smiles around ye fling.

And now I have only space left for one more quotation, and it shall be the bridal strain in which the Princess Ildefonsa gives the dying Attila to understand all her loathing.

*Ballade*
*Ildefonsa*
1.
The eagle darts from the mountain's crest
With the headlong speed of light;
Morn's golden rays on his pinions rest

As he speed on his upward flight.
Lord of the mountain, thy toils are begun,
Oh, boldly on, till thy goal thou hast won,
Mount, eagle, mount, to the sun, to the sun!

*Attila* (rising)
A cheering song: its accents nerve my soul.
But ends the ditty thus?

*Ildefonsa*
2.
The vulture lies in his mountain nest
Far over the cliffs away;
Deep stains of blood on his pinions rest,
He was struck as he seized his prey.
Lord of the desert, go hide in thy cave,
Nought from the darts of the hunter could save,
Sink, vulture, sink, to the grave, to the grave!

It is mainly out of regard for Howard Glover, who expended on this wild and romantic Opera the music of his own poetical youth, that I have given these lyrical extracts. So much sweetness gone to waste may call for a gentle regret.

The following few lines from *The Transcendentalists, A Satire* forms ~~my brother's~~ Gurney's tribute to his friend Howard Glover.

And sure, 'twere wrong, to yield not tribute free,
Poet in sounds, and eke in words, to thee!
Let none condemn that from the aspiring throng
I call thy name to twine it with my song:

Though many a genial soul may seek the bays,
No heart will blame me if my friend I praise;
Regard and admiration, claim their debt,
And surely earth must thy genius yet.
I know, and prize, and well can estimate.
Thy spirit's throes beneath the frost of Fate.
Free joy in nature, keen delight in art,
The instincts twinborn that inspire thy heart,
Even these have barred thy swift access to fame;
Alas, plain honesty's a losing game,
But here I'll name the twofold role thou play'st,
Genial creator, arbiter of taste,
And proud, proclaim myself thy fresh song's lover,
Prompt Genius, void of rank pretence, Howard Glover!

*The Transcendentalists*

It was through Glover that my brother and I had the happiness to make the acquaintance, and later to acquire the friendship, of our great English tenor Mr Sims Reeves. We first met Reeves at Howard Glover's, a night or two before he made his debut on the 6th Decr. 1847 at Drury Lane, and took the town by storm as Edgardo in *Lucia di Lammermoor*, with Madame Dorus Gras as the Lucia. He sang to us 'Fra Poco', and I need not say that we sat entranced. That was the first of many golden hours spent in listening to his glorious voice, animated by the soul within, and we soon learnt to ~~love~~ value the man as much as we admired the artist. May I here express a very little of the wild delight with which we have listened to Reeves? Never have our souls been so musically stirred to their depths as by his enchantments. And as we felt, so felt the general public. Again and again we have seen the audience rise at him enthusiastically in order the better to give the better vent to their rapturous feelings. We loved his style all round, and thought

him equally unsurpassable in a simple ballad, an oratorio, on the Italian stage, or say by way of contrast in *The Beggar's Opera*. Our lives have been enriched by him. Ineffaceable is the happiness which we owe to his genius. A great artist, every great artist, deserves men's gratitude. Could anything be wanting to his complete success? Nothing at this day; but for a time it was the fashion in 'society' to contrast his grand effects unfavorably with the level and pleasing efforts of certain Italian singers. And Gurney's indignation was aroused, and he burst into song. The following lines from his *Transcendentalists* will speak for themselves.

In Reeves the rarest qualities combine;
Art's highest Magic, and the glow divine
Which kindles generous souls with nameless force,
Which vulgar fashion reprobates as coarse.
That mean and small refinement which would throw
Convention's pall o'er, above, below: -
A voice, which ranging wide, possesses still
A sympathetic quality to thrill;
Now charms you like the zephyr's softest tone,
The nightingale bewildering forest-moan,
Now like the storm-wind wakes to glorious strife,
And kindles passion's billows into life:
All by that task controlled, that instinct high,
No study can achieve, no art can buy,
Heav'ns gift at birth, which, falling from above
Attuned the artist soul to light and love.

Hear him as Edgar Ravenswood complain:
This is no forced, no artificial strain;
Your soul lies whelm'd 'neath those deep seas of grief
Until a sigh, or tears, must yield relief.

Hear him of Nelson's death the burden sing,
Where is the heart would not responsive ring?
Even Fashion's slaves are rapt beyond control
And start to find they still possess a soul.
But oh! in Handel's strain, that awes and charms,
List him as Samson taunt the giant's alarms,
Or else as gentle Acis trill his lay,
Or as brave Maccaboeus fire the fray;
Or hear him in those strains most rapt of all,
As Jepthah mourn his one loved daughter's fall,
And then, with heart-restoring melodies
Follow her angel-wafted to the skies. -
Can critics list, and coldly say 'Twas well?'
And can the Public wake not to the spell?
It wakes, to momentary glow it wakes:
Beneath the charm Convention all forsakes;
The vast crowd thrill with joys unknown till then,
And Music stirs the hearts of Englishmen.
But soon that most unwonted ardour dies,
Ardour that must its owners much surprise.
The crowd goes home, and mutters, 'I declare,
Reeves does sing finely though.' 'Yes, very fair,' -
'Not in good taste, though, quite, but he'll improve',
And so the dull world slides along its groove.

Those burning lines may at least serve to show how one sympathetic poet-soul appreciated another.

The Chartist scare, which came off, if I mistake not, on the 10th April 1848, gave my brother, oddly enough an opportunity of 'doing the State some service.' I don't mean that he and I, in common with thousands of other

Londoners, were special constables, though we were so, but something more. He had kept up his intimacy with Ernest Jones who was only second to Feargus O'Connor in the Chartist movement; and on various occasions, by common consent, these strangely assorted friends addressed audiences of working men in an opposite sense. In France the fiery eloquence of the Chartist orator might have kindled a revolution, but in sober England it was calculated to produce less effect. Still passions were worked on; and it may have been well that a generous voice was uplifted on the other side. Many of those working men knew Ernest Jones' shorter poems - the socialistic ones - by heart; and if he broke down in a quotation of one a dozen memories came to his aid. I have spoken of the friends as 'strangely assorted', not because of differences with respect to the five points of the charter, but because the one was a socialist and the other a conservative. Ernest Jones was a true poet, possessing the 'feu sacré', but I fear that only his more socialistic rhymes - to which I have made allusion - have a continued existence, and that ~~to this hour~~ on the lips of intelligent but radical mechanics. The citizens of London were in a proper fright, though the chances are that everyone would have done his duty if matters had proceeded to extremity. The great Duke, if I am not mistaken, had placed cannons so as to sweep the bridges if the Chartist mob should persist in crossing them. Then on the 9th of April Ernest Jones, in concert with his leader, authorised ~~my brother~~ Gurney, after much persuasion on his part, to be the bearer of a message to the assembled ministers in Downing Street, to the effect that if the huge cart bearing the monster petition, and a few carriages containing the principal petitioners, might approach the Houses of Parliament unmolested, the Chartists would, as a body, desist from all attempt to cross the bridges. It was, as will be readily understood, a message of conciliation. ~~Archer~~ Gurney, then a barrister of the Middle Temple, sent up his card, merely writing upon it 'On urgent Chartist business', and was admitted at once to an interview with the ministry of the day, who were as anxious as anybody. They gladly gave consent to the

terms proposed; and thus, through my brother's instrumentality, the bargain was struck and adhered to. I need not add that Gurney was thanked for his patriotic exertions to preserve the public peace. Ernest Jones was consigned to prison, in that same year 1846, for a term of two years and four months, on account of his political speeches, and he employed his enforced leisure in the composition of many striking poems and of some ~~hardly~~ scarcely less striking drawings. We thought him hardly dealt by; and who would not think so who compares his sentence with that of Irish ~~politie~~ and English political offenders at this time? Some of his ~~very~~ characteristic and friendly letters ~~to my brother~~ will, I trust, appear in this *Memoir*. Let me quote one at once, though I am quoting it in this narrative two or three years after date.

Hampstead 18 Dec. 1845.

My dear Gurney

*'My Life'* will be out in a day or two - and many thanks for your notice of it, which I long to read, as you know how much I value your opinion. The title is simply *'My Life, a Poem.'* By the bye, I was lamenting to Newby yesterday that he did not publish for Browning - he might publish for you, he '<u>does for me</u>' (that sounds funny,) if he had Browning he would have the triad of the day. He blushed very much - and said, he had the other Browning - Henry, I think he said. Who the deuce is he? Do you know? I advised him not to let <u>you</u> slip. What of *King Charles*? Now then, tell me, when do you come to town? and how long do you stay when you *do* come? I shall be so glad when I see you. By the bye, on Sunday morning I heard the best sermon I can remember hearing, at a little hamlet in Hampshire, called Farlington. White surplice, offertory, &c. were there in full force. - I cannot refrain from expressing my utter disgust at and contempt of the low, petty, gasping, cheating, infamous spirit of the trading and mercantile classes of this

> Country - and of all others I dare say. It seems to me that the farmers are fools and the traders knaves. It would almost make the Devil a Tory to see and hear them. I am a liberal, a thorough liberal, you know, but by Charlemagne! - I have half a mind to advocate an unlimited despotism with a thunderbolt for a king! The low, mean, paltering scoundrels deserve no better. I intend taking an active part in politics, which is the arena I am meant for, and have half a mind of convening a public meeting myself, as any free-born Englishman surely may.
>
> Yours ever.
>
> Ernest Jones

Where was Ernest Jones's prescience when he did not include Tennyson in 'The Triad of the day?'

Seeing how shattered were to prove the high hopes of both these poet correspondents, there is a sadness in the bright augury of the above letter. Gurney considered that My Life was beautiful as poetry. Where is it now? And where are the Chartist poet's Battle Day, Corayda, The Emperor's Vigil, and *T*he Revolt of Hindustan, beside other minor poems of high merit? If, as I believe, these works are out of print, ought they not to be republished? Can the works of a man of genius and true poet pass away almost at once? True, the forces of Ernest Jones were, from a Conservative point of view, ill-regulated, destructive even, but they were not the less real forces for that; and bright banners, sweet flowers and sweeter music were not wanting to counterbalance the ringing of the tocsin and glitter of the revolutionary pikes and swords.

In his *Transcendentalists* Gurney thus expressed himself concerning his Chartist friend:

Or he, the Chartist bard, whose angry lay
Seems like the ocean, tipped with cream-white spray
Rearing in billows mighty to devour,
Even Ernest Jones blends sense and taste with power.

And he writes thus in his

*Ode*

*To the child of Ernest Jones*

We know not, little one, if thou, like him
Thy favored sire, shalt chant high bardic lays,
And on wild genius' wing shalt burst earth's shadows dim,
And soaring high in air command the world's loud praise. -
But this I deem not. Rarely was it known
That one with genius fraught, as thy bold sire,
Who summons strains unearthly from his lyre,
Sweeping its chords with strange all-glorious fire,
Felt by himself alone,
That one who woos us from this earthly sphere
To genius' magic world where heav'n itself is near,
That such Immortal, left behind him here
A child, who in that father's domain
Should o'er men's spirits reign!

And here I end a chapter which, as I conceive, might have pleased my brother well, devoted as it to the ~~memory~~ mention of several of his youth's chosen friends: only that he would have had other and more distinguishing praise and regard to bestow upon each one of them.

# Chapter XXIV
# Unlimited liability. Whitchurch Canonicorum. The Rev. James Bandinel his reminiscences ~~and Whitchurch Canonicorum~~. Majorian 1848-1849

My brother's headquarters were in Town, at our mother's house, 3 James Street, Westbourne Terrace. He was in the habit of attending Matins daily in the church on Paddington Green of which Mr Buckley was Incumbent. On Sundays he often found his way to the well-known church in Albany St., served by Mr Dodsworth. Later, when Mr Dodsworth was about to forsake the Anglican for the Roman Communion his remonstrances were most earnest. His work during this period was mainly literary - his favourite study being theology. I don't imagine that he gave much of his time to law.

~~I have omitted to mention that he published at Oxford in 1847, with Graham of the High Street, a satire called Humbug, in which the vials of his political wrath were out-poured inter alia upon free trade. The first edition sold off rapidly, but it was not followed by a second. I quote a few lines from what was all strong and pointed.~~

What is the wisdom of these modern days?
Good things to blame and evil things to praise.
And what the valour which the age commands?
To cringe to foeman and to kick our friends.
And what the principle we liberal call?
Why faith to boast no principle at all.
Enlightened century which deems aright true
That wholly false to be our fathers knew.
And thence of course conclusion sage must draw

Whate'er was lawless then should now be law.
Thy statesman like thyself enlightened grown,
At other's 'rattings' smile, and boast their own:
'Dull bigotry alone can hold its way
And not the current of the times obey.
Such obstinate perversion works disgust;
Expediency commands, and yield we must.'

transferred AWG.

Expediency - O talisman divine!
Men's vows may chide thee, but their votes are thine -
An airy harlequin of dubious hue
What wondrous changes thou canst bring to view.
Thou wav'st thy wand, and lo! 'neath magic's gleams
The Union Workhouse as a palace beams,
Conservatives in liberal vizards glory,
And what was erst dubbed Whig is now high Tory.
O age of wonders, all thy skill and power
Have proved at last one favored mortal's dower.
Thy valour, wisdom, principle, ability,
Have centred in one Prince of versatility.
Why trifle more? Would we that name conceal,
Enlightenment should rise and thunder Peel.

Articles from Archer Gurney's pen appeared in many of our Reviews, not including however *Quarterly*, *Edinburgh* or *Westminster*, - the two last indeed not being of his way of thinking. He tried ineffectually to obtain a footing in the first of these three. A series of German articles was contributed by him to the *Cologne Gazette*, setting forth the aims and characteristics of English political parties.

One of the many Magazines and Reviews to which Gurney contributed in 1848 - I purposely omit the name - had for Editor and part-proprietor a plausible person. Let him too remain anonymous.

‘The children of the night, let night receive them!’

This gentleman had promised payment to Gurney at the rate of £8 a sheet; but when payment should have been made, no money was forthcoming. In truth the publication was already in a ~~forlorn and hopeless condition~~ hopeless state of insolvency. Then this editor, professing that he must acquit himself of his obligation, offered his contributor in payment of past work several shares in his publication. The like offer was made under the like circumstances to another contributor, the Rev. James Bandinel; but Mr Bandinel, being by blood half Scotch, declined the bait. Gurney ~~accepted~~ swallowed it with the speedy result that he was proceeded against for the debt upon the publication. Hereupon, acting under legal advice, the victim of unlimited liability went into hiding for five months - from October 1848 to March 1849 - at Whitchurch Canonicorum near Bridport in Dorsetshire until a compromise should be effected. This was brought about finally at I know not what sacrifice. - Whitchurch Canonicorum was chosen as a place of refuge because my brother’s friend, the Rev. James Bandinel, was there in charge of a district, Marshwood, - one of four sister districts - the Vicar of the mother-parish being the well-known W. Palmer, author of a *Treatise on the Church* and other learned works.

That was a pleasant ~~and profitable diligent time~~ which Gurney spent at Whitchurch, for there he found undisturbed leisure and employed it diligently. Give him at that period a sympathetic friend, and an unstinted supply of pens ink and paper, and he was bound to be happy. Whilst at Whitchurch he lived in intimacy with the Bandinels, standing godfather to

their second son, and teaching in their Sunday-school. He had a congenial companion in Mr Bandinel, a devout churchman and a man of marked literary ability, who was writing at that time *The Rose Queen*, a tale which appeared in *Ainsworth's magazine*. Some of his bright and playful letters will I trust find a place in this *Memoir*. Gurney alludes thus to Bandinel in his *Tr*anscendentalists:

> And thou, whose song that happier time recalled,
> Dear Bandinel, ere taste and music palled,
> Was not thy 'Lufra' rich in tenderest lays?
> Ay, but not these the Age delights to praise.

The scenery at Whitchurch is more than pleasing. There are hills which stretch into Devon, and a valley that runs down some four or five miles to Charmouth. Mrs Bandinel writes 'Mr Gurney had lodgings in the village, but spent his afternoons and evenings with us, devoting his mornings to writing. It was at this time that he enchanted us all by reading aloud his translation of a play of Grillparzer's, which I often urged him to publish.' - To Mrs Bandinel I am also indebted for the following local information: 'The vale of Marshwood is very lovely - rich woodland, and ~~bordering~~ running down to Charmouth, ~~which is a lovely bay~~ a beautiful bay 2½ miles from Lyme Regis. One cliff, the highest and boldest overlooking the bay, is ~~surrounded~~ surmounted by a crown of red sandstone covered with gorse that blossoms most brilliantly a great part of the year, and gives the hill its name of 'Golden Cap'. The people were at that time a wild lawless set, but much attached to Mr Bandinel. Mrs Bandinel also supplies me with a kind memory dating from a later period and another locality, when my brother helped to nurse her dying baby, and earned her lasting gratitude.

I don't know that I can do better than transcribe here a letter from Mr Bandinel containing some reminiscences of his friend.

Dec. 1887
The Cypresses. Whimple, nr. Exeter.

My acquaintance with your brother, my dear friend, Archer Gurney, originated in our contributing to the same Magazine; for, being mutually attracted by each other's contributions, we each requested the editor to introduce us to the other, and thus commenced a sincere and I may add ardent friendship of more than forty years' duration. This was grounded and cemented by sympathy of thought and feeling, and agreement on many vital points, and was enlivened by a sufficiently marked difference of opinion on some important questions to deprive it of anything like insipidity. Your brother and I were bound by an answering loyalty and devotion to the Church of England as such, independent of any attachment to a school or party. Indeed his almost total independence from party influence or party bias in matters of religion was one of your brother's distinguishing characteristics. This resulted from that intense truthfulness which distinguished all his thoughts and feelings and words and actions. It was a matter of impossibility for him to tell or act a lie. It was not only that it was abhorrent to his moral sense, but it was physically impossible for its inherent and absolute incompatibility with his nature. In the same way he was incapable of any meanness. He was in fact thoroughly a man. Yet with this intense manliness was united extreme gentleness, each at once contrasting and blending with the other. He was also a thorough Englishman, yet wholly devoid of every vestige of insular prejudice. His substratum of character and tone of mind, with conversational gifts rarely met with, rendered him one of the most delightful companions either in society or in private that I have ever known, and I have associated with many men distinguished for their social success. He was more delightful than Charles Greville, or 'Conversation Ward' or

Dr Hook, or Samuel Wilberforce. I have only met with two men whom I consider his equals - the one 'Lavalette' Bruce, whom I had the great privilege of listening to for many years, the other Washington Irving with whom I spent a fortnight when he stayed at my father's house the last time he visited England. I have spoken of your brother's gentleness and truthfulness. They were so great that they made it difficult for him to believe in the cruelty or treachery of others. Nor could he realize or comprehend the emotion of hatred or the thirst for vengeance.

His intense individuality gave an energy to all that he did and a [ ] to all that he said. But it also stood in his way, for it deprived him of those aids and advantages which result to a man from close combination with others, whether in matters of private interest or public life. This individuality and truthfulness made him ignore the fact that there are times when speech indeed may be silver, but silence is golden. If he thought that a statement was true, or an end desirable, no consideration of consequences would induce him to withhold or delay the utterance of the testimony which he believed it to be his office to give without fear or favour, hesitation or delay.

He has left behind him many works of high literary merit. Amongst his most successful essays I would mention that on *Dickens and Thackeray*, another on *The Christianity of Shakespeare*, and a third on T*he German Mind*. His *Charles the First* is a work of very high merit. His devotion to his hero does not make him unfair to Cromwell, of whom he has given a most masterly portraiture. The whole poem from beginning to end is a reproduction of the story he narrates with its characters and its colouring true to the life absolutely true - yet instinct with the fire of genius. His *Iphigenia At Delphi* is in its way perfect. His *Songs of the Present* are full of truth and life. It is to be regretted that his other volumes of miscellaneous poems - with the exception of

*Spring* - were not more carefully sifted and selected, and that explanatory notes were not added in some cases. Nor must I forget to mention his glorious translation of *The Second Part of Faust*, which is one of the most spirited and successful translations existing in our language. I understand that it is contemplated to publish more of his translations from the German. I hope this intention may be carried out, for I seldom, if ever, enjoyed anything more than a translation of one of Grillparzer's plays, which he read aloud to us. There are other original poems which ought to see the light.

Let me conclude with a stave which I composed nearly forty years ago in the early days of our friendship.

Archer Gurney, Archer Gurney, in thee I've found at last
The substance of the shadow which I worshipp'd in the past,
The heart that cannot waver, and the tongue that cannot lie,
The faith that cannot falter, and the love that cannot die,
And the ever living, ever springing hope that cannot fail,
And the eye that never cowered, and the cheek that ne'er turned pale.

*James Bandinel.'*

I am thankful so true a friend as Mr Bandinel should have been preserved to my brother in life and in death. His reminiscences are not those of an outsider, and it is with grateful pride that I record them here.

Whilst in hiding at Whitchurch Canonicorum, and whilst resident more especially in the village of Marshwood, Archer Gurney wrote *Majorian*; and I looked up authorities for him in the Bodleian Library. This cost me some pleasant pains, but after all Gibbon has told us nearly everything that is recorded of the Emperor Majorian, and of his grand but ineffectual stand against the withering asceticism which destroyed the Christian Roman

Empire. This World-drama, as it is fitly entitled, was written in five months, which for its author was to write very leisurely - if indeed it were quite finished - at Whitchurch. He was contemplating the taking of Holy Orders. He wrote devoutly for devout spirits, though he wrote picturesquely and dramatically for his own satisfaction. For although his ~~mind~~ aspiration was now ~~bent on~~ tended to the priesthood, he was resolved that in his case there should be no surrender of the rights of citizenship or the inspirations of his beloved muse. He would even write Opera libretti still, and plays, and go to the theatre when he had a mind to do so. He would not keep himself always high strung, knowing what befalls the noblest instrument in such a case. And so he was to experience no shock of incongruity in beginning a day with the Holy Communion when aware that he was to end it in a stall at the Opera. Art for him was sacred; he ever claimed it for God; and he had a faculty for yielding himself up, turn and turn about, to devotion and innocent gaiety. That was the man, his weakness and his strength. *Majorian* is possibly too theological for a widespread acceptance. And on the other hand it may be thought too romantic, too anti-ascetic, to be read aloud in a devout sister-hood. The writer put into it all his soul, and also dramatic fire, fancy and imagination. In it he has presented us with a picture of Christian asceticism and of Heathen license, side by side. The character of Majorian towers almost painfully above the other dramatis personae, with the exception of Lucillian, Christian priest, in whose words and deeds the poet appears to embody his own aspirations; and if so, his ideal of the Christian priesthood will be admitted to be a high one. The poem is written with the object of claiming for and in Christ the rightful use of this world; and a dreary age - not without splendid contrasts – is passed in review, the action being laid ~~in the first half of~~ early in the 5th Century. As with most works that have a direct object, the harper may be held to harp unduly upon one string. What had especial charm for the writer was the unpretending and heroic and Christian endeavour of one man, the Emperor Majorian to stem the tide of corruption; but the Caesar’s efforts were foredoomed to failure:

and hence arises a degree of gloom which, in spite of much that is noble and many a lively touch, after a while depresses. Only a Christian mind could have conceived this work, and only a poet could have executed it; but its length, if read at a stretch, is portentous. One or two Epochs should, however, certainly be published experimentally. The drama is divided into five Epochs, not Acts, each Epoch being of the length of an ordinary play. I confess that, with regard to the chances of *Majorian* proving a success, I am as much at sea as most managers are said to be in the case of most plays before they have been acted, and most publishers in the case of most books before they are published. But we Gurneys have ever been 'the fools of hope', and so I incline to prophesy success. I may add that *Majorian* is intended for the study only, and not for the stage. It should be borne in mind that *Majorian* was written subsequently to *King Charles I*, and consequently when its author had reached the fulness of his powers.

Now let me take my readers into counsel, and plainly this can only be done by the aid of quotation. But as it would never do to range over the boundless infinitudes of five Epochs, we will confine ourselves strictly to the 1st Epoch only, and even so not reproduce a like of its merits or demerits.

*Scene I*

*Forum of Tréves. In the background the Cathedral.*
*Majorian (20 years of age) seated at the foot of a column, a manuscript in his hand, musing. On the left, Gratianensis, Paconius, and Athenodorus, citizens of Tréves.*

*A procession of pilgrims appears from the right in the background, and enters the Cathedral, chanting in slow and measured tones their*

*Hymn of Pilgrimage*

Where the desert's burning sands
Swathe in gloom earth and sky,
Simon on his pillar stands.
Worship, sinners: Heav'n is nigh;
For the powers of heav'n and hell
Round about the tried one dwell.
Fiends are whispering fierce temptation,
Angels heralding salvation.
There descends the Glorious Sire
There the Son doth faith inspire,
There the Spirit blends his fire,
Three in one: all worlds, admire!
Simon, blessed Simon, pray
For us hapless cast away,
Us, who trespass day by day,
Us, who tread the beaten way.

*They have entered the Cathedral. The sounds die away.*
*Song of Maytide (from the left)*

Merrily, cheerily, pour the tide
Of music's bounding waves along,
And down the current let gladness glide,
And life itself be a may-tide song.

*Paconius*
Aha! they counter strangely, mirth and gloom,
Like gall and vinejuice mingling.

*Athenodorus*

Credit me,
‘Tis a shrewd chance I think, you said they came
From Syria, these illustrious?

*Gratianensis*
Worthy sir,
‘Tis so. The holy, thrice-immortal Simon
Hath rear’d his grace a column, which, men say,
Doth touch the lower heav’n: and there he stands,
Hath stood, these full score years, and lists for aye,
The counsels everlasting.

*Paconius*
Was not, sirs,
Some Nimrod cursed for building? Simon’s blest.

*Athenodorus*
Most worthy sir, you mock not?

*Paconius*
Jove forefend!
I but admired the cunning of the saint
To rise on earth so very near the skies.
But let that pass.

*Athenodorus*
‘Twere safest.

*Gratianensis*
Ne’ertheless
Past question, holy Simon hath Heav’ns ear.

*Paconius*
Credit at court, right worshipful?

*Gratianensis*
At court?
Yes, sir, the invincible Augustus, he,
Imperial Theodosius hight, thrice blest,
Is sway'd by sacred Simon evermore.

*Paconius*
No wonder, then, his arms proved so resistless,
And reach'd so far. In words he outflanks Hannibal,
Yet ne'er his feet Byzantium's gateway crossed.
Tush, such a monarch
Will save the world, both east and west, be sure.

*Athenodorus*
Take heed!

*Paconius*
Yes monks are lords, no place for men,
For speech is sin, and life is sin, and all
Is sin, but dirt and dulness. Let you revellers
Who ween their mirth shall not ensure damnation
Shelter their sconces, or some monkish staff
Will flatten them ere morn. - And right, too; right,
Most worthy Gratianensis: I am with you;
Your wisdom's mine. - But for a safer theme.
Speeds not the great Aetius hither soon?

*Gratianensis*
Report doth so avouch it.

*Paconius*
Hence to move
Against the Goth in arms terrific? Ah,
It cheers one, sirs, to mark one warrior's soul;
Not fire, bold action, strong resolve. He slew
His foe at greeting.

*Gratianensis*
With your leave, right worshipful,
That deed was somewhat tinctured, somewhat tinged,
With ----------

*Paconius*
Ha! With what?

*Gratianensis*
With valour

*Paconius*
Dyed in valour:
No silly scruples brook'd his bold desire.
He thought, he struck, he vanquish'd. This was Roman.
— Eye me not, sirs! Ween you, earth brought so low,
Abjured its sense of pow'r and hope of glory,
That daring wins no more applause from mortals?
Blame you the deed heroic?

*Gratianensis*

I, sir? Surely,
Surely, Illustrious, -------

*Athenodorus*
We grant what's past recall:
For who would shake the earth or strain heaven's canopy?

*Paconius*
Why this is well. We may admire inaction
In those who spend their life in lifelessness,
Monks, hermits, all the liegemen sworn of lethargy;
But they who use this world should use it wisely,
And scorn mean niceties.

*Athenodorus (pointing to Majorian)*
There is one, I wot, good sir,
Who needs your lesson shrewdly, save I err.

*Paconius*
Say you? and who is he?

*Athenodorus*
The bold Majorian,
Already famed for deeds of high renown,
Though he's a Christian tried.

*Paconius*
Is he simple yet,
And weens to win the goal by creeping snaileries?
As though a swordless slave with beasts should grapple
Fresh from their Lybian wastes and keen for prey?

Years shall bring counsel: he must cast afar
The scabbard of remorse, which blunts the edge
Of action.

*Gratianensis*
Something have I glean'd, right worthy,
Which half I dread to breathe; but Heav'n axoile my tongue!
That Greek Philosopher, who haunts our city,
Whom some give out for Pagan lewd idolator,
The saints forefend!
Hath a right comely daughter, darkeyed Zoe.
'Tis said, this maid hath witch'd Majorian's soul,
And he for her sake might abjure -

*Paconius*
St. Simon?
Upon his column? holy Simon? Never!
No, rest assured, right worthy Gratianensis,
Man never fell so low, from Simon down
To Plato's God!

&c. &c. &c.

x x x x
x x x x

*Gratianensis*
Give o'er! give o'er!
I see our saintly Bishop hither wend him
To swell the rites with all his sacred train.

*Athenodorus*
Then let us linger not,
Or he might chide. I'll enter yonder temple.

*Gratianensis*
Have with you, pious sir,

*They exchange low bows with Faconius and depart.*

*Paconius*
No heart have I
For these lip mockeries. I'm for blither sport
Our may-tide gambols, mirth and kisses. Hence.
*(Exit to the left)*

*Hymn (rising from within the Cathedral)*
Sinful is our every breath,
Sinful life, and sinful death.
Would'st thou scape eternal woe
Sinner, aIl behind thee throw,
Naked to thy Maker go.
Hate existence' barren strife,
Father, mother, sister, wife,
Hate thy body, hate thy life!

I have somewhat shortened the opening scene, which, as I conceive, lifts the curtain effectively upon the prevalent condition of things. Of the next scene I can but give brief extracts. The Bishop Severus lingers on his way to the Cathedral to remonstrate with Majorian for ignoring holy rites. Majorian asks,'What rites?'

*Bishop*
Even this hour
A penitent train of pilgrims pass'd thee by,
And, far on Syria's burning sands, have sought
The presence of a saint, and homeward speed them,
Their strength renew'd by his celestial counsels.

*Majorian*
The pillar'd Simon, that fanatic monk?

*Bishop*
Fanatic? Youth, of heresy beware!
Know'st thou the virtues, hast thou scann'd the trials
Of that most godlike man? How, tender yet,
Even in life's carnal springtide of felicity,
He bound a sturdy cord athwart his frame
That entere'd in the flesh and wrought fierce woe?
How in a cistern nights and days he cower'd,
Perishing piecemeal and in emulous fervour
Even there had died, had Heav'n not willed fresh glories?
How in his wall'd up cell, full forty days
He drowned in agonising thirst and darkness?
How after this, for more than twice ten years
One week he pass'd on his bared knees in prayer,
The next, extended swoon'd, half earth, half heaven?
And how, upon a mountain's ridge, he chain'd
His body vile, and moved not three long years?
And how, as highest theme for praise and wonder,
He now erected stands, and long hath stood,
Midway to Heav'n, while round him throng the nations
And crave his ghostly counsels and his prayers?

Cans't thou learn this, and long not to adore
The grace of Heav'n in its high consecrate servant?
Dost thou not answer me? - You vellum there,
Which so engross'd thy mind, was't Satan's artifice
Whose lore thrice steels thy heart?
Some Pagan idol, haply,
Virgil or Ovid? Give it me, - Ha, youth,
The sacred Scriptures?

x x x x x x

I must restrict myself to a few more lines. The Bishop is denouncing the use of this world.

*Bishop (in continuation)*
Bethink thee, son,
What is our volatile life but a dim plank.
Cast o'er the vast fire ocean grimly heaving.
The ebbless ocean of eternity?
Would'st sport upon the plank? Behind thee lies
The past, a giant shade, an infinite chaos;
The dread unmeasured future yawns before.
The present is a light thin airy crust:
One step, and thou art through! Beneath is hell!
The times are grave; the last fell hour seems imminent.
The vultures of destruction downward swooping
Above the carcase shall be gathered soon.
The glooms the end. Thou flee the wrath to come.
Look not behind, but flee, or reap damnation.
*(He passes with his train and enters the cathedral)*

*Hymn (from within)*
Soon, the hour of doom shall be:

Naked to thy Maker flee;
Miserere, Domine!

———

Then follow's Majorian's soliloquy beginning

'I am alone, on earth alone'

but this I may not pause to give. To him comes the enlightened and cheerful Pagan philosopher, Leontius, with his creed of enjoyment. There are few things in the poem more ~~powerful~~ admirable than this interview, but it is too long for quotation. Leontius is followed by Zoe, Queen of the maidens of the May; and Majorian's steadfastness is shaken at last. Then comes his work friend Basil with his remonstrances; but in spite of these, Majorian, now desperate, resolves to break away from an impossible Christianity.

*Majorian*
Basil, my faith seems lost in all I lived for,
I now despair of Rome, of Christendom,
Of earth, and I will grasp life's honey-guerdon.
Basil, I have believed; it was in sooth
A golden dream, my Basil!

As Majorian rushes off to the Pagan may-tide revels, the *Hymn* from within the cathedral rises once more.

Make the sanguine Cross thine own!
Earth and all its glories flown,
Living death be thine alone!

Courage is coming to me and increasing conviction that *Majorian* has

sterling merit. Having begun to give my readers an idea of what the 1st Epoch is like, I dare not stop short. The next chapter shall carry on and conclude this subject.

# Chapter XXV
# Majorian in continuation
# 1848-1849

I continue my quotations from *Majorian*. This drama is a virginfield, having never been ~~thrown open to the public~~ trodden by foot of man. Consequently in any comments of mine I can run contrary to no critic. I am the very first to gather in it a bunch of flowers, or weeds, which you will; only, dear reader, suffer me to babble of flowers. Whither his fancy led him, thither ~~my brother~~ the poet followed, inconsiderate of consequences. He aimed simply at realising his ideal. No question arose with him of what would please or displease. And the cumbrous form, too, was all his own -, five aeonial Epochs: How little did he resemble - so far as prudence is concerned - the painter Frith, whose engaging life we are all reading. In the case of Frith we have popular subjects popularly treated. And the result has been present fame and fortune. Do I envy for my brother's sake? No; great as is Mr Frith's success, I only wish it were greater. His modesty, his diligence, his perfect temper would disarm an ogre. In the treatment of the drama before us, and in his choice of subject, Gurney more resembled the painter Haydon, matching the latter's yards of canvas with his miles of verse. The next scene will present us with some lyrical poetry; and, if I may venture to say so, Gurney had some facility in that line. Here all came of itself; nothing was made; effort there was none. A line might have been improved here and there, possibly, by slight touches on the part of the brilliant if careless artist; but I trust a charm will be found to exist even as things are.

*Scene the Second*
*Green mead without the city; the blue river in the background. Sunset.*
*The mead is thronged with revellers; youths, maidens, children, the*

*aged as spectators, &c.*

*May-tide chorus*

Weave each sunny moment in a chain of golden bliss!
Maytide wakes the blossoms with her zephyr's playful kiss,
Every heart must open on such festal eve as this
To joy's magic ray;
Life hath many a sorrow, as roses many a thorn,
Who could bear the midnight, if golden gleam'd not morn?
Woe that all things earthly to fade and change are born!
Let us live our day!

Change the jocund measure;
For, a note of woe
Mare our festal pleasure;
Nothing will we know
Of the shades that hide joy's beams below.
Once on earth we surely
Care may cast afar,
Bent to worship purely
Beauty's golden star,
Seeing things which should be, not which are.

x x x x
x x x x

Quick, quick! each maid is waiting
In sweet virgin shame
That her youth for maytide meeting
Softly breathe her name.

Let him yield the flow’r born token:
By a kiss his faith be spoken!

Lo the Virgin-queen of may
Comes in loveliness to sway
Us and all our sports this day,
Graceful Zoe! tenderest, sweetest,
Of all flow’rs thou, maytide! greetest;
Thou our festal joy completest.
By the appointed lyric rite
Yield the signal of delight.

*Zoe advances, followed by her maiden train.*

*Zoe*
All the bright blossoms glisten, glisten,
Through the sweet dews of the early may;
All our young bosoms listen, listen,
If to their sighs comes an echo this day;
For Love was born on the first of May.

This is the day, this is the hour
When he who once dwelt the Paphian bower
And still claims hearts his temple-dower
Proclaims his right
And bids unite
The maid met sweet, the youth most bright,
And ours to seal that mystic rite.

x x x x
x x x x

*Chorus of Youths*
We come, we come, as the rivers flow
In the bright fresh Spring to the meads below.
As the sunbeam darts on night's dews most fleet,
As the zephyr speeds his rose to greet,
As the spirit leaps forth in love's young hour
And claims as his own sunny rapture's dower,
As the lip to the kiss, as the heart to its bliss,
We kneel and we whisper and seal all this.

*Chorus of Maidens*
We hail, we hail
As the late Spring's gale,
As the heath love's tale:
All hail!

*Zoe*
And comes not mine elected? Do I call
In vain? Or hears he, rests he nigh.
As this fond fluttering tremor half-assures me?
Com'st thou?

*Majorian (pressing through the throng)*
I come, and at thy shrine I fall.
*(Kneeling, he offers a rose)*

*Zoe*
Thy sternness claims strict penance. Meekly pine:
Bend low at Amor's shrine:
Round thee soft chains of roses must I twine,

Thou art Love's prisoner: own then Love divine!

*Majorian*
Mine art thou? Mine?
*Genoveva enters flying, closely pursued by a troop of Bacchaval youths.*

*Chorus of Youths*
Turn thee, maiden brightest,
Thou who maytide slightest,
Fairest, purest, lightest
Of all forms earth-born!
Harshly thou requitest
Hearts thou fetter mightest:
How can roselet whitest
Blush with crimson scorn?

*Genoveva*
O pity, in the name of Heav'n!

*Majorian*
What voice?
*(He cleaves the throng)*
What tumult?

*Genoveva (half fainting, at his feet)*
Heav'n, thine angel!

All this, and more, forms an effective contrast to Christian asceticism. The issue may be guessed. Majorian escorts Genoveva safety to her father's door, and two hearts are made one.

The next scene passes in Lucillian's house. The good priest's character is brought out lovingly, and shewn in action among his penitents.

Here I must needs make one or two quotations of a grave and Christian character. My trouble is what to select and what to leave, where all is good.

*Scene the Third*
*Interior of Lucillian's dwelling. An elegant yet simply-furnished chamber. Lamp burning.*
*Lucillian comes from the right, followed by Prosper.*

*Lucillian*
'Tis strange, she comes not yet. She went with Varro, say'st thou?
On such a day, at such an hour. Why Martha
Must needs be sick to the death.

*Prosper*
The boy said, dying, sir.

*Lucillian*
Then I must follow.

*Prosper*
Sir, they wait without,
A crowd of supplicants; and I believe not
Poor Martha's case so grievous.

*Lucillian*
So must we here fulfil
More pressing duties. Who attend? Is one

That seeks confession of his sins without?

*Prosper*
One penitent profess'd, the craftsman Probus.

*Lucilllan (aside)*
Probus? The sturdy Probus? rough, but true
As tender. - Ah, forgive me, Lord, that I
Should doubt the best may fall!
*(Aloud)* Admit him first:
We'll see the rest anon.
*(Prosper retires)*
Lord Jesu, drive distracting cares away!
My child is Thine, and thou wilt guide her best;
I know Thine angels guard the pure and true:
And on my pastoral duty let me centre
Mind heart and soul.

*(Enter Probus)*
*He advances slowly, stops at a few paces distant from Lucillian, and fixes his eyes on the ground.*

*Lucillian*
I little thought, good friend,
With grief to welcome thee within this dwelling,
For, for light cause thou seek'st not thus.
I know thy Nature resolute and rough,
Yet fixed to duty still by discipline
And sober faith. How hath the tempter then surprised?
Speak where thou standest: change not posture, Probus:
I know thy heart is humble. So proceed.

*Probus*

This noon, one long a stranger to our dwelling,
Thou my wife's brother, monk Hilarion,
With Pharisee stride approach'd and cried aloud,
'Witness I bear against this desolation:
Woe, woe, to all backsliders! to the worldly
Who love their ease and wives and children, woe!
Dare'st thou, a Christian feast in heathen wise',
(Our homely board was laid,) while pious pilgrims
Pace barefoot from the sacred Simon's shrine?
Down on thy knees, within thy chamber mure thee,
And fast, and weep, and pray': Much more speaks he
With like austere reproof. All this I bore,
And as a Cross received my Master sent me,
Which it behoved me hail with gratitude.
But he, not satiate thus, inveigh'd against
The man whom most on earth I prize and honour,
My pastor and my guide, Lucillian, thee:
He cried that Tréves sinn'd chiefly by thy pattern,
Which would this world and duty reconcile,
Which music, painting, poesy, all the gifts
Of Satan unto man had striven to palliate,
Which called the judgement down on him, so spake he,
Like Elymas, who charm'd true hearts from God.
Far more he raved; vile words of slanderous spite,
I wist not what; but anger stirr'd within
And fired my will to hasty vengeance' deed,
And I did strike and hurl'd him forth sore stricken;
And hither now have come to own my sin
And crave my penance.

*Lucilllan (after a pause)*
Is it so? I thought
I better knew thee, Probus. Years may pass
Ere I can so far trust thee as of yore.

*Probus*
O say not that!

*Lucillian*
Thy heart must still remain
The sternest monitor; and counsel, Probus,
Thou best may'st seek of Heav'n upon thy knees:
For naught may he of heav'nly mysteries trace
Whose eagle gaze at noon would pierce the sun;
But sad pale downcast eyes, when tears most blind them,
May hoard a light within, shall radiate through
The darkness. Probus, thou hast sinn'd deeply:
Thou knew'st how many men, wise, earnest, vigilant,
Thought with thy brother. Our beloved bishop,
This too thou knew'st, approves not much our practices,
Though he forbid not. Dreading to displease him,
May, conscious how abuse may art deprave,
Thou know'st that I have long resigned these trifles
On which thy brother harp'd dwelt; profaner poesy,
Studies of colour, music's gentler strains,
These sought I once to dedicate to heaven.
This fraud full many a verse has charactered,
Or form has limned, or harp'd light vagrant strain,
And even to others sought like lose to minister:
Our lectures thou recallest - - nathless Probus,

Heav’ns servant err’d; those secular works, fire swallow’d them,
And this right hand achieved the sacrifice.
Yes, round us near and far,
‘Tis taught ‘Perfection should be sought in gloom,
Who would be God’s true child must choose the cell.’

x x x x
x x x x

Can we dare to wonder, Probus,
That they who deem our course accurst or vain,
Should blame us, should reproach, should even condemn?
How lacking we in faith or charity,
How little worthy of our generous cause,
If taunts like these shall make us blench and start
And seem to prove them true!

Thy brother, Probus,
Spoke by his light; thou, against light, didst render
Ill for his purposed good, therein betraying
That Saviour, who for all the sins which wrong’d
Gave blessings back upon the accurséd tree.
Remember, we
Have cause for gratitude to all that trace
The straiter path. Are we not suffer’d still?
Our gracious Bishop though he prays Heavn’s light
Be granted me to yield my stubborn will,
Still loves me, bearing with my fancied weakness.
Thence have I pow’r for good, which holier men
To heav’n more gravely dedicate, not employ,
Being dead to earth and earthly needs. And so,

Depart! This night I bid thee pass in prayer
Upon thy knees. If, with the morrow's dawn,
Come strength and grace, as I would doubt not, if
Thy heart allow, - then draw thou near the altar
And take from me the Bread of Life, the sign
Of Heavn's forgiveness, and the cup of blessing. There
And then will I absolve thee. Go in peace.
*Probus retires reverently and slowly*

*Lucillian (alone)*
O God forgive the sinner!
He err'd through love of me, so vile, so frail,
And o'er that, weather beaten cheek the tears
Flow'd silently.

There, I have given that interview almost in its entirety, but may not enter upon the interviews with the remaining penitents. Meanwhile the father's anxiety on account of his absent daughter keeps mounting. And great is the relief when Majorian enters with Genoveva. After the father's thanks have been duly paid to his child's deliverer, he and that deliverer are left alone, and then this follows.

*Lucillian*
Thy pardon friend,
If I, who must as father live to bless,
As Christian priest demand, how cam'st thou near
These Pagan revellings? A voice within
Constrains the austers speech; nor ween my love the less
Because it shelters neath so stern a seeming.

*Majorian*

O sir, you meet my wish, for I aspired
Since I beheld you, to be honoured thus.
Receive this heart's confession.
Nor wont am I, grave sir,
To lay my nature bare to strangers' eyes.
But see me now
Upon my knees before the priest of God.
Alas, alas, I have gone far astray:
I have unlearnt my boyhood's innocent gladness
That led me trustfully to kneel adoring.
I loved creation
With all of rare and beautiful and bounteous
And in them thought I loved my God, nor shrunk
Nor surely wholly shrunk from self control
From plaiting thorns within life's blossom-wreath,
Although tis like I eyed its flow'rs too fondly.
But lo, a voice, an absolute voice, proclaim,
This can suffice not; I must wholly leave
Base earth's communion would I serve high Heaven.
Then, father, then most hideous doubts assail'd;
Then pride inspired my heart to arrogant madness;
I share to think: the Pagan code, 'Enjoy,'
Deem'd wisdom's call. This day, this very day,
Green earth nor skies of azure met my glances,
But one broad golden glare enfolded all.
And then, one form of magic brilliancy
Allured my senses: impiously I rush'd
To Bacchanal sports, my faith behind me casting,
My soul a lost waif toss'd on passion's billows;
But ah, Heav'ns wondrous grace was watchful still
Exceeding my abasement. In the crisis

Of my worst fall, my passionate degradation,
Thine angel daughter came: her silvery voice
Burst the foul spell that bound me, snapt the chain. –
But well I know, not lightly expiate
Such sin may be, the outward revelation
Of growing faithfulness, murk discontent,
The roots from which has sprung so vile a growth.
This, O my father, works remorse most deep.
I have not loved my God, and I have lost His favour.

*Lucillian*
Dear son, thine was a deadly trial.
Is it thy presence, is it Heavn's own grace
That yields me back my vanish'd past again?
I dare to speak my inmost heart's convictions.
Thou could'st not overcome the voice within
Which cried, this world is good, if used for virtue's sake:
And hope of such glad service barr'd from thee
By arrogant sentence, faint thy spirit droop'd
A fire snow-heap'd. O how should I condemn?

x x x x
x x x x

For vainly striven have I:
My forces reach'd not to so vast, an enterprise.
Man's world, God's Church, frown'd on me. This heart quail'd.
I burnt the strains wherein I had sought to vindicate
The Christian use of transitory joys;
But thy free courage, thy more resolute spirit
May prove a fitting instrument for Heav'n,

May quicken dying Rome. Bend low, my child,
Let tears flow free: for by mine office' power
I do absolve thee in my Master's name
From thy past sins, if truly thou repent'st them.
May Christ confirm thee his true soldier ever!
May He accept thy will and cleanse thy ghostly sight!
And now, loved son, I urge thee on the morrow
To seek the saving Bread of life from me
In our great feast of sacrifice.

Much more passes between the Christian priest and his noble penitent, which I may not reproduce here. Suffice it to say that in this scene Majorian receives highest consecration to his generous self-set task to live and die for Rome, serve God in and through His fair creation. And at the close Majorian has a private suit to prefer, and pleads it thus.

*Majorian*
Farewell? And could I leave you thus, my longings
Unbreathed, and leave perchance, for years, forever?
Like bird, that dies in spring, his song uncaroll'd
Although such happy music filled his breast?
Lucillian, reverend pastor, Christian tried,
With such vague knowledge, after one brief greeting,
I dare to love your child, your peerless child,
As life, far more, as visible angel-providence,
To seek acceptance of my suit from you,
Who have grave cause to know I speak unworthily.
Deny you this clear vision.

*Lucillian (after a pause)*
Herself shall answer you.

Majorian I can use no arts with thee.
At once receive the truth.
My happiest temporal wish would reap fulfilment
In young Majorian's suit for Genoveva
I know thee, know thou art not fancy's slave
But one who'll hoard his pure affections deep
As sunshine treasures light unutterable,
Despite the frenzy of a brief despair.
And for the maid,
Her mother was of royal blood - Christ shield her!
Hath left her child a goodly heritage, -
Why of the setting speak to him who spies
The jewel? For she is a peerless child,
Meek and yet generous, fraught with all brave impulses;
Almost too grave at times for maytide's season;
But ah, she feels our hapless age's woe
And mourns her father's ghostly loneliness
Barr'd from the councils of his storm co-mates;
But now, fresh hope - Majorian,
Herself shall meet thee, list thy suit, and I
Abide by her decision.

I don't seem to have the right to review, as a critic might, these various speeches. I may be too near in blood to the author for that. Otherwise I might have much to say. Who will not sympathise with Probus? All that Lucillian says has an especial value, constitutes indeed the 'raison d'etre' of the poem. I have had to cut him down mercilessly. My own words are mere connecting links. If all is grave hitherto which passed under Lucillian's roof ~~is grave~~, there is something less grave in store for us. I allude to the love-scene between Majorian and Genoveva. To be sure, such lovers as this pair could not be arch and sportive; the anxious times were too much for them;

but a little ~~brightness~~ grace has been conceded. ~~to them all true love has an element of home~~ Every love scene should have a charm of its own. May my readers thank me for adding one more such scene to their list. I will answer for it, they shall think their own love scene the best!

*Majorian (alone)*
Like some snowwhite mountain-peak
Her loveliness draws, yet draws my venturous footsteps.
Can she love *Me*? So swiftly? Dare I hope it?
She comes.

*Enter Genoveva*

*Genoveva*
My father bids me thank you
Before you leave us. If I heard aright
You speed after tomorrow.

*Majorian*
It is like.
And may I dare to hope one thought will follow –
O Genoveva,
I scarcely dare to breathe my soul's petition,
Although your sire, - but that must warn not you –
I am unworthy of your pure regard.
I dare not think upon the past, and how,
How should I urge the future? This remains
Alone, to bid you see me as I am,
And judge in pity. Whither tends this tale?
If your heart speaks not I am lost indeed:
I love you, Genoveva.

*(After a pause)*
And now, though I must rove the mazy world,
A combatant awhile, one guiding star,
One earthly goal of peace my heart would shrine
Its tender love for thee. Dost thou that love contemn?

*Genoveva*
Concealment have I practised not. This much
My trembling heart assures me: thou, who wondrously
From worse than death didst save me, must command
My constant fervent prayers, my kindliest wishes,
Esteem, regard and what no words can speak
Of sisterly affection.

*Majorian*
Artlessness!
Not cold still gratitude - O Genoveva
I am all thine *(He kneels)* Could'st thou be mine for ever?

*Genoveva*
What shall I answer? – Rise, I pray you, rise,
Rise, I entreat.
Majorian, long thy name
Familiar to this roof, these lips, has been
For oft of thee discoursed my honoured father.
And so, and so - O bid me speak no more!

*Majorian*
And could'st thou then in sooth precede in thought?
But yet I doubt my joy.

*Genoveva*
Thou need'st not doubt.
My father taught me to revere thy fortitude;
Too apt a pupil I. One magical hour
Hath call'd a thousand blossoms into life
That lay beneath the soil, occasion waiting, -
But what I speak I know not;
Forgive the wild vagaries of my tongue!

*Majorian*
I am too blest - too blest!
Once more, and yet once more, I am thine alone.

*Genoveva*
A nameless bond, methinks, unites our fortunes!

*Majorian*
Dearest, each passionate impulse, shalt thou temper
To virtue down: thy love, like tenderest music
That floods the common air with melody,
Shall so subdue my nature to its sway,
That every sternest task shall seem delight
And duty palpable bliss.
*(After a Iong pause)*
Now must I call thy sire to speak his pleasure.
But hark! yon blast!
*Flourish of trumpets from without*
*Re-enter Prosper hastily*

*Prosper*
The mighty general, Aetius,

With officers attending, claims admission.

———

Aetius has come to claim Majorian for the wars. Revering Lucillian, the general takes part with Majorian and the rest of Lucillian's household in a Vesper Hymn, with which the 1st Epoch closes.

Here is the opening verse of *Vesper Hymn*

Lord of Lords and King of Kings,
Gratefully we bend before Thee,
And with tremulous hearts adore Thee;
Thou who hear'st, though cherub-rings
Round Thee carol loftiest things,
What the lowliest mortal sings.
Father Son and Spirit be
Loved and worshipp'd, One in Three,
Three in One, sole Trinity.

———

There is cause for regret that the author of *Majorian* did not publish this poem one Epoch at a time; for so only might each part have received those last touches, those final inspirations, which are always of inestimable value, and never more so than when as here the dimensions of a work are colossal. The author must have been out of heart indeed not to have made this venture. Be it noted that the wisdom of *Majorian*, such as it is, is that of a young man. Yet was it written in the fire of early manhood, and I doubt not that – so far as it goes – it reflects the author's mind to the last. Has it life? Has it beauty? Has it a noble aim? And in how fair is that aim achieved? Here be questions which it is not for me to answer. The devout may think it too wordly; and the wordly may think it too devout. I have quoted from one

Epoch such matter as seemed, in my limited space, best to bear quotation. But what of the other four Epochs? They appear to me to flag but little. Indeed the 2nd Epoch, which plays mainly with the Roman army, strikes me as being equal to the 1st, and I think the same may be said with regard to the 3rd Epoch. I am not so sure about the 4th and 5th Epochs.

And *Majorian* owed its existence to the enforced leisure of a five months' residence at Whitchurch Canonicorum. Farewell, a kind farewell, to the vale and village of Marshwood; farewell to 'Golden Cap' hill; but no farewell - rather the hope of a happy meeting to those stanch and genial friends, the Bandinels, who possessed the sympathetic minds of the place, to whom doubtless each scene was read as in hot haste it was written. Every poet is apt to leave some poetical 'NachIass' or heritage behind him, and in this respect my brother did not differ from the rest, but even I was unaware of the wealth of this heritage.

# Chapter XXVI
# Ordination. Exeter
# 1849-1851

~~After years of hesitation~~, On the 21st October 1849, after years of hesitation, the great step was taken, and Archer Gurney, at the ripe age of 29, was ordained a Deacon by Dr Henry Philpotts Bishop of Exeter, - his ordination to the priesthood following within a twelvemonth, namely on the 22nd September 1850. He had spent a few pleasant days shortly before his ordination at the Bishop's *Villa*, Bishopstowe, near Torquay. Dr Philpotts had been favorably impressed by Gurney's contributions to the *English Review*. Two essays of his in particular, one in answer to John Henry and the other to Francis William Newman, had excited the sympathy of Dr Philpotts, and had inclined him to ordain their writer, though only 'a literate person' who had not even been at a theological College. The post assigned to the newly made Deacon was that of Assistant Curate in the parish of Holy Trinity, Exeter, of Holy Trinity, Exeter, of which the Rev. George Henry Shield was Rector, and the stipend was £40 a year. ~~Of the many sympathetic letters that must have followed upon the ordination, only one can be found. It is from Sims Reeves, and was as follows: 'I know not whether to congratulate you or not in your present 'line of business.' You are equal to anything. And I wish from my heart that your rise may be as rapid as your giant talent deserves. I fear the field is a limited one~~ at present~~. But be this as it may, you, my dear Gurney, have my most heartfelt wishes for your welfare and happiness.'~~

The leading people in the parish of Holy Trinity were at that time, with a few exceptions, strong evangelicals; and strong evangelicals are not likely - prima facie - to be taken with a Curate who writes Opera libretti, who teaches that this world is to be used in Christ, and who so far from

disguising his inmost sentiments proclaims them from the house top. And yet so earnest was the new deacon seen to be, so fervent in the prayer-desk, so striking in the pulpit, so devoted in the parish - a large one -, and I may add so conciliatory in private ~~consumation~~ intercourse, that those Exeter evangelicals accepted him with a surprising unanimity. For one thing his anti-Roman bias was pronounced - though this was as far as possible from being anti-Catholic; and for another he gave thoughtful men something to ponder over in every sermon. Age alone would make him a deacon 'sui generis.' Something was forgiven I suppose to his earnestness - evangelicals being in those days the almost exclusive admirers of thoughtful sermons. Still, on looking back, it seems to me wonderful that they should have borne with him as they did. His teaching was distinctly sacramental; and he failed not to reprove uncompromisingly his hearers' over confidence and spiritual pride in accounting themselves the elect, though he laid down that all believing humble Christians should not question their salvation, It certainly was no proof of the narrow mind with which evangelicals are sometimes credited that those Exeter people should have opened their arms wide to this young man, who, ~~neither could nor would speak~~ even in his green salad days, had but very partial recourse to their party Shibboleths, since his tendencies were ever 'high' and 'broad' but never 'low' - unless fervour and unction be so accounted of. Among Exeter friends who were not low-churchmen were the Bonds and the Rev. John Ingle. There may possibly have been some influential parishioners who held themselves aloof, but if so I never heard of them. Mr Bandinel writes to me: 'Your brother told me in his letters that the Evangelicals flocked to his preaching, in spite of the differences between them, because they believed that notwithstanding those differences he 'preached the Gospel.' 'When', added he, 'would their opponents not in such a manner?.'

Before long the Bodleyan lectureship at the so-called Wynyard Chapel fell vacant, and ~~Archer~~ Gurney was elected to this post, thereby adding

something to his slender stipend. The Bodleyan lectures were delivered on the Thursday evenings. The additional sermon a week would not trouble the new lecturer seriously, since he wrote almost as rapidly as he thought. The lectures were a source of special interest to him, he having it is likely a freer hand as lecturer than as Assistant Curate of Holy Trinity.

~~In the early summer of~~ Early in 1850 my brother spent a few days with me at my curacy of Huntspill near Bridgewater in Somersetshire; and presently I returned if indeed I did not anticipate his visit, staying over on Sunday in Exeter and seeing something of his work. What delighted me most were his diligent and affectionate labours among the sick and poor; and I could not help seeing how deep was their attachment to him. In particular, he devoted himself to the unfortunate inmates of a lazar-house, or rather of a 'congeries' of cottages, wherein dwelt persons afflicted with a loathsome skin disease. These poor creatures appeared to me nothing more or less than lepers in advanced stages of leprosy; and to approach them was distressing to more senses than one. Archer's hopefulness, sympathy, and heavenly-mindedness in the presence of these lepers was worthy of Lucillian the good Christian priest in *Majorian*. He raised them by his burning faith, and gladdened them by his tender assurances ~~that they~~ of God's love, whilst comforting their poor bodies to the utmost of his might.

It was now that I heard for the first time parts of *Majorian* read to me as well as some lighter works which my brother had written since we had last met. He told me that he missed having a great literary work on hand - in spite of his present congenial occupations - and spoke with pleasure of the few months spent by him at Whitechurch Canonicorum when each day had witnessed an advance in his opus.

I am somewhat at a loss what to say about my brother's ministrations in church. The sermons no doubt were powerful, and admirably even

beautifully delivered. His voice was of wide range and sympathetic. The voices of two clergymen only occur to me as being equal to his in volume and sweetness of tone -, those namely of Dr Claughton, Bishop of St. Albans, and Charles Warren Vicar of Clun. His countenance, when animated, would light up strangely. But I scarcely knew whether to like or dislike his manner at this time of saying the prayers and of reading the lessons. The prayers were spoken with a fervour that was startling, and with more intention, with more changes of voice, than we are accustomed to. The alternate verses of the Psalms were read loudly and emphatically, joyously or sadly as the sense required. The lessons were read so as to compel attention, and as though the Reader believed them to be inspired. At times they were read - more especially ~~that~~ those of the New Testament - with depths of tenderness. It was all most real to the reader, who was truly emotional, and would probably affect poor people very favorably, making them understand it may be what they heard for the first time in their lives; but perhaps the personality of the reader was unduly prominent, and the possible effect upon educated and polite persons might be one of singularity, and even - let the word be launched - of self-consciousness. Should I confine myself to genial praise? What sort of a picture would that make which was all lights and no shades? Bishop Selwyn, being asked, ~~these two questions~~, 'How should a great man's life be written; how, for example, should you wish your own life to be written?.' I made answer, 'Tell first all my faults, and then tell whatever the grace of God has enabled me to do in spite of them.' I am persuaded that Archer Gurney, if asked the like questions, would have answered in the like spirit. Let me add here a few lines addressed to me by the Rev. James Bandinel.

> 'My own experiences of your brother's reading and preaching were most favourable and delightful. His reading of Scripture was most impressive and most telling - devotional without cant - earnest without excess - dramatic without being theatrical. His intoning did not destroy

the sense or lose the spirit of that which he intoned. His preaching too I considered simple forcible manly and persuasive. But I ought to say that I have not heard him very often. I heard him at Soho. I heard him in 1854 and again in 1873.'

It will be easily understood that I talked these matters over with my brother, and protested against the disturbing influence of so much emotion. He said in answer that people required to be disturbed, polite people first and foremost, and that it was natural to him to say the prayers and read the lessons as he did. But I fancy, for all that, that he may have modified his voice and manner after my remonstrances. In the pulpit he was simple and direct. A popular preacher, and such my brother was, is exposed more than most men to the inroads of vanity, I could not say that he altogether escaped from this subtle danger; and yet I am sure that he fought against it, and at his best rose above any such feeling, being in a very true sense lowly minded, and even accounting himself unworthy to act and speak for his master Christ. As yet he held it becoming to write his sermons, though to have preached extempore would already have been a matter of pleasure to himself. The *Western Times* called him 'the Tractarian Curate of Holy Trinity', but these words had no solid application. It would have been hard indeed to label him then or ever, since he always thought his own thoughts and never merely agreed with a party. Whether for good or evil the 'mot d'ordre' of a party-leader was not for him, unless it could have emanated from himself. One of his amusements at Exeter was a little scrimmage every now and then with the *Western Times*. He hit out straight and got hard knocks back - that spirited radical and ~~extra~~ ultra protestant paper nicknaming him for his fiery energy the Rev. Marcher Gurney. There is one form of annoyance to which popular preachers are exposed, from which he did not altogether escape.

~~Mr Bandinel~~ A friend writes to me,

‘When I was in Exeter I heard from a highly respectable elderly clergyman that your brother was put to much annoyance by a young lady who attended his pulpit ministrations falling desperately in love with him, and being terribly disappointed poor girl at his not reciprocating her feelings. It was no fault of his’, my informant said. ‘He could not help it, but it was very uncomfortable for him.’ Whilst at Exeter he wrote more of his beloved Opera libretti, and worked at putting together the materials for his first volume of lyrics.

Let me quote two or three letters that survive from the Exeter period.

14 June 1850
Exeter

My dearest Mother
I have sent some lines to Mrs Glover of the Haymarket Theatre which I trust will both comfort her and do her good. A great deal about her Art, and also much about Religion - in fact just what you would have desired, I think. It is too long to copy. Glover wrote me a hurried line two or three days back. I don’t mean to send him *The Tempest*; but I have an admirable plan for an Opera on *The Winter’s Tale*, which I should like Glover to compose. It is not much like Shakespeare’s Play, excepting that the whole Shakespearian scene is in it with Florizel, Perdita, Polyxenes, Antolyens &c. I quite give up the Statue scene. With me Hermione is the priestess of an oracle where no mortal may enter. Perdita takes refuge there, and Hermione is about to call the attendant priests to destroy her when she discovers that the refugee is her daughter. This gives occasion for one of the most intensely dramatic situations I ever heard of.
Ever your most affe Son

Archer

I think Scribe's *Tempest* vulgar.

As too probably neither the libretto founded upon *A Winter's Tale*, nor that founded on *The Tempest*, will ever see the light, I extract part of a short scene from the latter.

*The Tempest*
*Romantic Opera in 2 Acts*
*Act I. Part of Scene the Second*

~~*Miranda (solo)*~~
~~Oh how oft in brightest hours,~~
~~Even when light tranced earth and sky,~~
~~Have I dropped earth's sweetest flowers~~
~~With - yes truly - with - a sigh!~~
~~Nay, - how oft when forms of beauty,~~
~~Radiant spirits hovered near,~~
~~Have I all their love and duty~~
~~But requited - with - a tear!~~

~~What needed I? What asked I? Never child~~
~~Did Sire more fondly cherish! Yet - at times~~
~~O foolish heart! I pine from very bliss~~
~~Like flowers that die if summer languor.~~
~~And would like autumn blasts sweep wildly o'er the world,~~
~~To seek relief in toil and woe!~~

~~*Allegro*~~
~~Then would I bound o'er the sunshiny ocean,~~

~~Then would I dust through you measureless air,~~
~~Wooing the starbeams to pay me devotion,~~
~~Bathing in night-dews my golden-hued hair!~~
~~Happy the wind that may speed from the bower away~~
~~Over the desert, still ever, still ever,~~
~~Far from the eastern land calleth the bulbul's lay~~
~~'Blest after labour is love to the lover!.'~~

*Ariel*
I swim - I dive - I ride - I fly
Right duly! Right duly!
And all the breezes around me sigh,
'We love thee, love thee!' - But what care I?
Nought truly! nought truly!

*Prospero*
Hast thou performed my will?

*Ariel*
All - all - grave Sir, is done!
The King and eke. his lords are set
Fall long ere this on the firm dry shore,
And their eyes for Prince Ferdinand are wet,
Whom they'll ne'er see more - whom they'll ne'er see more.

*Prospero*
Thinkest thou? But doth he follow thee?

*Ariel*
Ay - ay - I have drawn him along!
Like to a sunflower seeking the sun

Followed he ever my summertide song:
See - he comes - and my goal is won!

*Prospero*
That's my brave Ariel! Well hast thou done!

*Prospero retires to his cell. The magic music continues.*
*Ferdinand enters dreamingly*

*Ariel (sings, standing in the centre of the stage)*
Deep - deep
Do they sleep
Where no surges leap!
Deep! Deep!
Weep! weep! weep!
I'm invisible to thee,
But thou soon a sight shalt see
Fairer far than me!
Oh! for her
Oh! for her
Who would not a mortal be?
Flee! flee! flee!
*(Ariel disappears)*

---

I quote also a few verses from the lines alluded to in letter.

*To Julia Glover*

And so you leave us? Ne'er again
Are we that sparkling voice to hear
Which in an always-varying strain,

Now lark, now linnet, charm'd the ear,
First ringing fresh and clear and sweet,
Then hush'd as springtide's tenderest gale.

A voice whose memory ne'er shall fleet
Until our sense and hearing fail.
You leave us. Never, nevermore
That 'Jealous Wife' so fond, so true,
Shall bare her heart our eyes before
And cause us mirth, yet sadness too.
Ne'er more that very thing of life,
Quintessence of all scandal's arts,
That dame light 'Candour' mischief rife
Shall buoy to glorious glee our hearts.

Ne'er more that matchless Widow Green
Across the boards, sublime, shall sweep;
Ne'er more Dame Ashford from air een
Woo tears most fond through smiles that creep.
And this last trophy of thy skill,
This doting mother, nature's own,
From Goldsmith's tale, - before us still
Its image lingers, - all are flown.

Yes, natural feeling greets thee here
In strains which echoes sure shall find;
A tribute this of heart sincere,
No ditty like the wandering wind.
Yet ere I leave this friendly page
One word I needs must add of hope,
Of Christian hope to cheer thine age;

This fitly falls within my scope.

For though the drama's art I love,
A Christian minister am I,
To service vow'd all arts above,
Of Him who loves, who once did die
Of Him who died for mortals all,
For thee, for me, if we obey
The accents of His gracious call,
'Come unto Me, faint hearts, alway!'

Yea, come we, casting all behind
Of temporal fame or self-applause!
Best sympathy we there shall find
While life its limit nearer draws.
Believe not, what harsh tongues would tell,
Thine art must needs that God offend
Who gave the pow'r to work the spell,
That God, who rests the true hearty Friend.

x x x x x
x x x x x

Cleansed through His blood for thee who died!
O seek Him! Linger but to fall
Beneath His feet! Yield earth, fame, pride,
As incense to the Saviour all
For not more costly tributes save
These eastern Kings in Bethlehem old
Than service of a spirit brave
And humble hearts have stores of gold.

Once more farewell! I linger long.
Deem not the spirit fond or vain
That breathes such monitory song!
O friend, my heart is in the strain.
May'st thou, May I, thou artist great,
For whom this last grave wreath I wove,
For ever share the changeless state
Foreseal'd to all who Jesus Love.

———

Here is another Exeter letter.

15 July 1850
Exeter.

Very, very sad, my dearest Mother, is your account, and was the *Post's*, of poor Mrs Glover's last appearance. I sent her some lines to speak or read on the occasion as a Farewell Address, but rather as a mark of respect to her than anything else, for I scarcely supposed she could be strong enough to deliver them. I thought her beautiful voice never would go. Yes, as you say, her spirit is indomitable. Nothing save religion can help her, and that should come from a clergyman, and from an elderly man if possible. I don't think she would listen to anybody else. I know she is religious in feeling and under favorable circumstances would make her peace with God.

Here is another birthday! Fortunately it does not find me doing nothing as the last did. I thank God for that. I am now of some use in my generation, and may be of more. Yet this is a very solemn day. I am actually 30 on this 15th of July! - O how little have I done! how much

have I left undone! I don't know how I could have lived through another birthday, if I had not been honestly and usefully employed. - No, my dear Mother, do not fancy the halfhour I expend in sending Augustus suggestions for a sermon can ill be spared by me: I have not sufficient occupation! That is the only serious complaint that I would make. I shall have 3 sermons to write this week -, and what then? say they take me 3 hours each, which they will not, that would be 9 hours out of a whole week. Positively nothing. I could write 2 sermons a day with ease
Ever he
Archer.

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It is an interesting fact that all Mrs Glover's desire, when dying, was to receive the ministrations of ~~my brother~~ Archer Gurney. She asked for him repeatedly. He was summoned from Exeter to her bedside, but though he lost not a moment she had passed away before he could be with her.

I will quote here ~~some portions if not all~~ of the Farewell Address alluded to in letter.

*Farewell Address of Julia Glover.*
*(To have been delivered by this great Artist, but Death's approach forbade.)*

For fifty years, kind friends, whom round I view,
Both friends and patrons! I have toil'd for you;
You or your Sires. Who serves arts royal cause
May ask, I feel, a generous soul's applause.
Tis something even to cheer the sad or dull
And seize with transient grasp the beautiful,

And by responsive sympathies awake
A kindred gladness for truth's sacred sake.
The time has been when by the greatest's side,
Who now lie low, to move men's hearts I tried
To love of Shakespeare's self and many a bard
Who worshipp'd beauty. Stern our times, and hard;
And when men seek forgetfulness of life
From art dramatic, tired of worthy strife,
Of noise and money getting, sue and fuss,
They come to pass an easy hour with us.
And crave amusement only, uncant mirth,
Or else mayhap in wit or humour's dearth,
Content them with burlesque or screaming puns
Or even mere legs and arms, of strapping ones;
But let us not revile the modern taste,
Alas, the best of harvests runs to waste
If reaper will not reap or binder bind,
And vain all not if you rest deaf and blind,
And when we count for solace to our fears
Grudge sympathetic smiles or kindly tears.

For me, I dare to boast, with heart sincere,
That I have wrought my best within my sphere:
This may the world demand from one, from all,
Effort and progress till the curtain fall.
But chief 'twas mine in glad Thalta's clime
To kindle mirth, and, spite of heavy time,
Labour to drive ill temper's mists away
And spread o'er daily life a sunshine ray.
Art have I loved, nor is contempt her due
Who sought to serve the beautiful and true.

But now in our great master-poet's strain
Blame not if I with Prospero complain.
All magic I abjure, must drown my book,
For the last time this night upon you look.
Even as that ducal exile now I want
Spirits to enforce or fancy to enchant.
Like him your prayers, your sympathies I crave;
I go, every third step henceforth my grave.
Farewell! O, where so long the boards I trod,
May art yet bloom, reviving from the sod,
And may a later summer, bless'd by fate,
Restore our drama to its happier state!

Farewell. To you, who linger on the scene
Whence she departs who long your friend has been,
I wish all blessings, more than tongue can tell,
And so, a long, a kind, a last farewell!

Yet another Exeter letter let me quote.

Exeter Christmas Eve 1850

My dearest Mother
A happy Christmas to you! And many many returns of it! I fear I must not say a merry one, lonely as you are. On the evening of last Sunday I preached on our Lord's Incarnation, on the words 'His Name shall be called Wonderful.' You, my dear Mother, might have been a little scandalised, because it was a happy sermon, and you are Puritan enough to think it scandalous to smile in the pulpit! and yet I think you would have been pleased. The Organist played us out to the Christmas hymn, which was very affecting. Yesterday I wrote two sermons for

Augustus, to be preached before Holy Communion on Christmas Day and the Sunday after, most inspiring occasions. A clerical friend happened to look in, and hearing what I was doing begged to read them: he has copied both sermons, and will preach them. Wonderful effort, say I! I could write, but as to copying them - O horrible! Well, this Christmas finds me a priest, and a worker in my Lord's vineyard, and I no longer feel the deep melancholy I used to feel on all such anniversaries, in themselves sorrowful or joyful. True, I am in no very exalted sphere of action, but I hope I am doing my Master's work in some degree, though of course very poorly and half-heartedly: at all events I am not a piece of useless lumber now. Perhaps here and there for someone Christmas will be happier and more blest through me, and that is much.

Wish a happy Christmas to - and - and all other friends: also to Kate (our Mother's trusty Irish servant) whom inform that I am a Catholic priest already, and that I shall be most happy to send my Christmas blessing to her, and to receive her confession too, if she will submit to the True Catholic Church of England and of Ireland,
I dine at Lady Farrington's tomorrow.
*Archer*

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With reference to the two short Christmas sermons written for one to which allusion is made in the above letter, let me say that I thought them nothing short of lovely then, and that I have not since altered my opinion. What do I not owe to my brother's sermon suggestions! for, as a rule, his aid did not extend beyond these. For very many years he has suggested to me text and theme for my sermons: so much so that those masterly suggestions, with ever a central thought, would fill a considerable volume. Long after, from a hortatory point of view, I was able to stand alone, it was a happiness to me,

and a blessing to my hearers, that the subjects of my sermons were still frequently due to my brother's eminently suggestive mind. I must have written more than a thousand original sermons, - indeed I have been taxed with being sermon mad - but rarely have I prospered with my other sermons so well as with those which owed their inspiration to him, from whom ever rolled forth a running fountain of fresh and holy thoughts.

Whilst on the subject of sermons let me quote two or three pages from a printed Exeter sermon ~~of Archer's Gurney's~~ entitled *The Danger and the Foe*. I must promise that the times were stormy. The Bishop of Rome had published his Bull partitioning England into Roman dioceses. Cardinal Wiseman had dated his mission from the [ ]. Lord John Russell, I suppose, had written his ~~famous~~ mischievous Durham letter lashing public feeling to madness. The anti-surplice movement was at its height. And the citizens of Exeter had convened an indignation meeting in which every high churchman in their city was to be dubbed traitor and held up to execration. One clergyman had been mobbed after officiating in his church. Then it was that Archer Gurney preached on Sunday Evening the 17th of November 1850 in Holy Trinity church a sermon of which the spirit was manly and the warning opportune. His text was *1 Ep. To Jim. Vs 20,21* 'Keep that which is committed to thy trust &c.' And, first he fired away at popery, and next he fired away at protestant lawlessness. Be it remembered that his overflowing congregation were ready to commit any folly on the strength of the No Popery cry, His contention was that more was to be feared from lawless men than from all the arrogance and superstition of the papists.

> 'As for being frightened, I do not see what there is to be frightened at; a Pope Bull, a trumpery piece of parchment, is not going to turn us all into papists, whether we will or no; things do remain and will remain precisely as they were. And believing this, my brethren, it becomes my solemn, my awful, duty, to warn you against the enemies of our Zion,

who are seizing this occasion to overthrow if they so can our spiritual battlements, to ferment dissent amongst ourselves, to set us all at war with one another, pastors and people, for matters of comparatively little consequence, to instigate a cruel, aye, and if possible, (I do not exaggerate) a violent persecution against earnest Churchmen, on the pretence of their being papists in disguise.

All reverence, we learn from these men, is to be put down and cast aside; our churches are to be turned into meeting-houses, or something worse; the very name of the Cross is to be made a reproach and a shame; our Prayer Books are to be mutilated on the plea of No Popery; yes, they have the audacity to call on the citizens of Exeter to petition against their Prayer Books; in fact, they are the enemies of the Gospel of Christ Jesus, and they are grasping this opportunity, if they can, to destroy the Church of God in this our land: God grant that they may not prevail! But I repeat, there is far greater danger of good and earnest Protestants being persuaded by these men to raise a cry against their own Church's doctrines, and to persecute their own faithful members, than there is of England ever becoming subject to the idolatrous Church of Rome.

A popular panic prevails, and these men are seeking to turn it (that is the honest truth) against our own Reformed Church, true branch as it is of the universal Church of Christ. I am ashamed to think of what has been written and spoken against clergymen for merely bowing at the holy name of Jesus, and turning to the east in repeating the Creed. One would suppose they must have been preaching the very rankest popery and idolatry for years. And yet nobody accuses them, that I know, of maintaining one single Roman Catholic tenet; - purgatory, or human merit, or ------- substantiation, or invocation of saints, or any one of these vile corruptions of the truth. No; for mere externals, - for little, or

call them if you will great differences concerning white or black gowns; (that, I believe, is the very greatest!) The Church of England is to be rent asunder, is to be devoted to destruction; and these men, however faithful, however earnest in the discharge of their duties, are to be hunted down as papists in disguise by their fellow Christians.

My brethren, though I have only been one year in Exeter, I have already learnt to love your city. I have met with much of kindness here, much of confidence; and, as far as I am personally concerned, with nothing of party spirit; with no distrust or enmity from any side whatever. And why was this? Simply because, weak and unworthy as I am, not unduly mistrustful, I believed what others told me of their faith, and therefore I was believed. I say, I have learned to love your city; where I have ministered in one of your largest parishes, however inefficiently, among the poor and needy; where thousands have gathered sabbath after sabbath to join with me in prayer and praise in these our 'Bodleyan' services, and listen to my plain and simple preaching of the Gospel of my Master; and therefore is it that I earnestly pray to God that not from hence the flame of persecution may go forth to light the fire of discord throughout our happy land, - that not whilst I am in Exeter churchmen should be driven here into actual civil war amongst themselves, every man's hand against every and confusion worse confounded.

In a few days your city gathering will take place, and many of you now present will no doubt be there. I dread that hour, my brethren, I confess it; because I believe, before God, that the enemies of our Church will seize that hour, if possible, to deal her a most deadly blow. They may not appear themselves, they will probably act through others who are self-deceived, (and with whom I have many of the strongest sympathies, whom I beseech to pause:) but if a persecution against the clergy of the Church of England be attempted, the consequences will

indeed be fearful. - For my own part, I will stand or fall with my brethren; I will not allow my case to be separated from theirs. The most unpopular of them may be, and are, far, far worthier men than I, more earnest and more holy, and certainly I will not desert them in the hour of danger because a wicked cry is raised against them, by a scurrilous and infamous newspaper, for the purpose of fomenting strife and hatred among the loyal protestants of Exeter. I beseech you, my dear brethren, do not listen to the profane and vain babblings of these men, concerning whom I may tell you ‘even weeping’, with the Apostle Paul, that they are ‘The enemies of the Cross of Christ’, traitors, heady-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

They are raising a cry against the Prayer Book as popish. Had they not better include the Bible which describes them with far more force and bitterness? Surely it would be the shorter and the safer way.

Hold Christians what is committed to you, - the true faith, once delivered to the saints, and guarded for us by the three great Creeds and by the unmutilated Word of God.

Most unwillingly do I preach on controversial subjects; but what is to be done when they wholly possess the minds of men? When a persecution is actually organising against your and my brethren? Will we let the wild boars come in and root up the Lord’s vineyard? Have we no holy zeal for Christian liberty, no desire to live and benefit our brethren, no Christian fellowship in prayer and praise and communion with our only Saviour? Oh for more of vital and spiritual religion! Oh for more of humility and love! Oh that the Holy Spirit would descend and breathe peace and concord into all our hearts!

Yes, Holy Ghost, desert us not! make us a happy and united Christian

people, the true followers of the Lamb! drive hatred and suspicion far from us , inflame our hearts to seek our Maker's, glory; and, if it may be, trick and convert the hearts of our persecutors and slanderers! - yes, bring them home blessed Lord, to Thy fold, that we may all be one in thee our Saviour.

_____

~~Here let me quote how difficult~~
The much-dreaded day passed off well.

I question if Archer Gurney ever preached more tender and thoughtful, or again more powerful sermons, than those written by him at Exeter, though his views deepened and ripened in the after time. There, as never perhaps to the like extent again, devoted congregations hung upon every word and this could hardly fail to call forth his best powers. Other and more educated congregations were indeed to attach high value to his teaching, but the parishioners of Holy Trinity ~~heard, so to speak, the first roar of their young lion, and took a personal pride in him and them~~ felt an especial pride in their young lion and loved to hear him roar. If he had remained longer in Exeter promotion must humanly speaking have befallen him. And yet it was with a degree of satisfaction that his mother and I heard of his leaving Exeter towards the latter end of 1851: for all this worship of the man and his teaching could not but be a trial. His next move was to a more bracing religious atmosphere, that of St. Mary's Crown St., Soho.

I thank God that I have been allowed to bring my brother so far on his way. ~~Henceforth the history of his life will be more open to any one to tell. His own letters will take very much the place of narrative, and will, as nothing else could, set forth the man himself~~. A career of usefulness lay before him but all his ability was to bring him no promotion. By a strange coincidence, the lessons appointed for the 15th of July, his birthday, in the old

Lectionary, hint as much, where it is written - Ecclesiastes IX.II - ‘The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong’; and again - Ecclesiastes X. I, where ‘A little folly in him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour’ is likened to a dead fly in the ointment. He was both swift and strong. A touch of vanity may have been the dead fly.

Here let me quote, at the risk of seeming self-contradiction, how difficult it is to present the priest and the theologian in comparison with the poet. And yet I hold this to be of even more importance than the other. Quotations cannot be often made with propriety from sermons or theological essays, however admirable; still less can ~~my brother~~ God’s servant be shewn on his knees in private devotion, or at the altar, or for that matter engaged in multitudinous ministrations to the sick and poor. But it may be more possible to show on his behalf that in and through his theological writings more especially his pamphlet of *Restoration* and his articles in the *Union Review*, he was for a season in ~~the top wave~~ the van of the Church movement of his day, and was even one of those who helped to give its first impulse to the great sacramental wave of our times.

# Chapter XXVII
# St. Mary's, Crown Street, Soho. 'Spring'
# 1851-1853

Practically that was a sole charge to which Archer Gurney now betook himself, though, as a matter of fact, he was the curate and representative of the Rev. Nugent Wade the Vicar of St. Anne's Soho. The post was of little money value - perhaps £120 a year but it was rich in honour. He the newcomer readily adapted himself to the new position. The change from Exeter to Soho was like that from a southerly breeze to a keen Nor-Easter. But to a man in ~~high~~ good health and spirits it was an invigorating and not unpleasant change. No more being carried on hands; no more comfortable sympathy; no more tittle tattle; no more flattering agreement or disagreement. In Soho you were at that time dead to all these things. London knew nothing about you, and cared less. You were lost in mighty Babylon. But your immediate surroundings cared for you and loved you. Your five thousand souls blessed your name. Your school was brightened by your instruction. Your choir, men and boys, were proud of you, and ~~were~~ proud ~~of~~ to aid~~ing~~ you. The 'esprit de corps' among the choir was tremendous. They were high church, so far as they understood what that meant, to a man or boy. They gloried in their Gregorians. They felt the immense go and spirit with which everything was done, and rejoiced in it. They spoke of their clergyman as "the priest of St. Mary's". The choirman, if I mistake not, were mostly young shopmen from Oxford Street, - Crown St. being situated close to where Oxford St. crosses the bottom of Tottenham Court Road. After one of their pastor's powerful sermons, they would say to one another on leaving the vestry, "Ah, he gave it to them!": or simply "Ah", meaning that they had been edified. They felt it was fine, or touching, or instructive, or all three, but scarcely said so because there was no considerable body of educated people to give the cue. All they knew

was expressed in the words “There’s nobody like Mr Gurney?”. Doubtless some live, and would gladly bear me out.

It was but rarely that a gentleman or lady found his or her way into St. Mary’s church, and then the chances were it would be a personal friend. But unconsciously I may exaggerate the poverty of the land. A friend writes: “Your brother had some hearers of a superior class - amongst these Judge Talfourd, and Lady Talfourd - who ‘kept hens’, as she said, ‘to lay eggs for the clergy’, and used to keep the priest of St. Mary’s well supplied”. What is far more important and interesting however - she told your brother on her husband’s death that his dying words were due to his having attended the services at St. Mary’s Soho - where your brother’s teaching had first led him to realise the dangers and evils arising from the sharp separation and want of sympathy between the classes of English society. There was not much of beauty in the church, though wonders have been done considering that it had been ~~originally~~ designed for a dancing saloon, and only diverted to sacred purposes by Mr Nugent Wade’s energy. The sanctuary was effective, - the altar being in the full view of all. The poorest people from the neighbouring courts and alleys thronged the House of God on a Sunday evening, but only the tidier sort were found there of a morning. Both early and mid-day celebrations were frequent. One or two Sisters would come occasionally to an early celebration from the ‘House of Charity’ hard by; but as a rule they had the services of their own chaplain, and so were independent of the priest of St. Mary’s. Matins was said daily at, I think, 7 in the morning, and Evensong at 8.30 in the evening. ~~when an exposition of five minutes duration was generally given.~~ The priest of St. Mary’s discarded written sermons except when he had to contend with a subject of especial difficulty. Very likely there was less of beauty in the sermons, less of finish, now that they were spoken extempore, but they would be even more effective than were those others which had carried all before them; only here there were but poor and ignorant people’s souls to

be edified and guarded from vice and error.

There was a field-day once a year, on the anniversary of the church's consecration, S. Peter's Day, when distinguished clergymen were the preachers, and when generous churchmen and churchwomen ~~came~~ assembled from all parts of London. Among these greater lights - I speak of the preachers - were the Bishop of the Diocese, Dr Saml Wilberforce Bishop of Oxford, Canon Christopher Wordsworth afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, the Rev. Nugent Wade Incumbent of St. Ann's Soho to which church St. Mary's Crown St was a chapel of ease - and Alfred Bowen Evans lecturer at St, Andrew's Wells Street. The last-named, A.B. Evans, had an especial affection for Gurney, which Gurney ~~warmly~~ reciprocated. Both were men of genius, and I suppose that drew them to one another. I remember a left-handed compliment paid by Evans to the extempore powers of his friend Gurney - spoken with a merry twinkle of the eyes. "Yes, Gurney, you'll do; you're not like those anxious fellows who are always harking back after their Nominative case!". Evans was a powerful extempore preacher, but could not often trust himself without book, as a sense of his wrongs and neglected condition was liable to embitter his speech. His written sermons were a delightful mixture of humour and pathos. How often has a tear come into the eyes of his hearers, and a smile upon their lips, and a good aspiration into their hearts, - and all in a moment of time.

The ~~sick and poor~~ parish visiting to be done in Soho was on a great scale. Many Irish were in the district, and it was not long before these warmed to the curate of St. Mary's, though never becoming sheep or lambs of his pasture. They were won by the friendly counsels ~~he gave~~ given to them at their homes, and by most generous aid. ~~ever seeking to riase them all he could~~. In the case of one bigoted Irish family things began badly. An old beldame made a rush at ~~him~~ the Curate with an open knife, resenting

something that he had said to a misconducted grandchild. He and that old lady eventually became ~~good friends~~ firm allies. There was plenty of ungodliness and infidelity in the district; but among the very poor not much nonconformity was to be encountered other than that which was Roman. There was no lack of respectable workmen in the district, and a sprinkling of petty shopkeepers.

The Curate of St. Mary's gained in the poverty-stricken habitations of Soho a hundred experiences which he hived and afterwards made honey from in his *Songs of the Present*. It was naturally to the English portion of the population that he chiefly devoted himself. He loved his people, and was a great hand at reconciling angry neighbours. Their affairs were his own. He treated them one and all with far more than patience, - with profound interest and affectionate concern. And they returned his good will to the full. So much sympathy is expensive, and he reduced himself at times to a penniless condition. No doubt, the dirt and the many sad sights were trying, but for all that the work was congenial, and I wonder knowing what he was - that he could ever tear himself away from it, I can only conceive that it was his mother's doing, and that she was justly apprehensive for his health.

When Archer Gurney came to Soho the manners of the population were bad, but he effected a softening in this respect. So many of the church windows had been broken on a Sunday whilst services were going on, and such a hubbub would be kept up outside of the principal entrance, that a policeman, especially told off for that purpose, had to be placed on guard. But the new Curate would have none of the policeman. The first time a brick came flying through a window of the church, as he was in the act of consecrating the elements, he marched out at the door declining the proffered aid of choirmen and churchwardens - and finding a lot of unruly young people assembled, Irish girls vendors of oranges, and big rough lads, so bore himself, - the surplice aiding - and used such fatherly speech, that

no more windows were broken. He had most of the elements suited to quell, or rather to win over, a mob, except height; but little men with brains and pluck can do as much as tall ones.

The fatigue of the life he led in Soho would have knocked up anyone who was not in the prime of life. His time was rarely his own, except indeed that he got away daily for a peaceful hour when he dined with his mother far from noise and dirt and smells, returning to Soho in time for Evensong. Probably this kept him up more than anything. Another rest was that he passed directly out of his sitting-room into the vestry, and thence into the church. The sitting-room was large but comfortless. It made however a capital parish club room, and was used as such on three nights in the week. The Curate would pass a late evening once in a way with friends. He was most fortunate in his house-keeper, Kate Byrne, an excellent creature, who supplied a big cup of coffee and a slice of bread and butter to all the members of the club who required these things, for one penny. Night was frequently made hideous by the quarrels of the neighbours. This sort of thing would take place. Long after midnight, bad language in the court below and screams would rouse the priest of St. Mary's from his slumbers. Out would go his head at the window, and he would ask the cause of the disturbance. "Sure, thin, your Riverince, it's Pat Flannigan bating his wife". "Pat". "Yis your Riverance". "Take your wife home this minute, and make it up with her". And the thing would be done, and that because they loved him.

The schoolroom was almost under the same roof as the clergy house, and frequent amusements were provided in it for the people of the district. Light entertainments were sanctioned by preference. On one occasion, ~~that I remember~~, some amateur, great at conjuring, was not forthcoming; the room was crowded; what was to be done? The Curate in charge bethought him of a plate of the old willow-pattern, and, apropos of that, gave a whimsical

account of China and the Chinese, falling back when non-plussed on his recollections of Sealy's delightful *Chinese Legends, of The Porcelain Tower*, which Leech has illustrated with admirable skill. Was Archer Gurney ~~the Curate in charge~~ but there, things were bound to go right, for his resources were almost inexhaustible, and his powers to please were equal to the wish.

It was from amid the squalor of grimy Soho that Archer Gurney sent forth his earliest volume of lyrics, his *Spring* published in 1853 by Bosworth of Regent Street, - and long since out of print. To what shall I compare it? To ~~a bunch of primroses~~ snowdrops, crocus, and violet? To a choir of early songsters of the grove?

> No hot-house flowers, few raptures, little cunning,
> Only another fount of crystal set a-running.

Surely no more charming first volume of lyrics has been given to the world. And only, as I conceive, by its having fallen upon evil times, could it have failed to please. The success of the book was possibly hindered in a measure - though I incline to think its fate was not hereby altered by a warlike *Dedication*. A volume altogether enchanting, but wholly unpretending and simple, was prefaced by a poetical onslaught upon the critics of the day. The cruel neglect of ~~his~~ *King Charles the First*, and the undeserved earlier failure of ~~his~~ *Faust Part Second*, had left behind a deep resentment. The morbid admiration expressed by the of the critics for various gross offenders against rhyme and reason made the poet indignant, and out of the fulness of his heart he spoke in verse. The *Dedication*, with all its possible imprudence, was not without interest. And, 'me judice', generous allowance would have been made by right-minded critics, had they existed. Let me here quote a few verses from the dedication. Not all therein written was irate - far from it. The fiercer lines may probably never

see the light again save here - since gentler ones are appointed to take their place.

Take then these young May-songs, these early gushes,
Of music light and free; thou world so cold:
Hast thou forgotten how the streamlet rushes,
When first the Spring dissolves each icy hold?
Or how the morning sun each blossom flushes,
O'er wood and lea, With hues more bright than gold?
Ay, Autumn's dreary mornings charm thine ear;
Spring scarce shall win thy sympathies, I fear.

And yet, if ye would leave awhile your whirl
Of toil and dust, your spiritless orations,
Methinks my Muse might lead ye - boy or girl,
Or man or woman: back to fresh sensations:
Come, follow, where the leaflets dance and curl
'Neath the free breezes! All things keep their stations,
As ever in the green wood's deep recesses;
There still the fond dove coos, the sunshine blesses.

Through the green grove its laughing rays are glancing,
Temper'd yet gay; the forest brooklets flow;
And even the sylvan nymphs, methinks, are dancing,
Long fancied dead, while fairy roses blow.
Seek not for 'Purpose!.' Chide not mere 'Romancing!'
Must we be always wise I answer, No!
At times we cast our learned books aside:
Who ever yet by study charm'd his bride?

Now comes the mischief!

For thee, weak critic: Whose obtuse audacity
Hath dull'd my nation's ear to fresh Spring-songs,
Whose artificial taste and false sagacity
Have forged the worst of chains, which bind too long,
Whose wordy folly and inane vivacity
Beneath thine iron mask have wrought such wrong,
I write these rhymes with chief intent to flout thee;
Like me, thou canst not: - I will do without thee!

If thou could'st like me, were I not myself;
For that must I be morbid, dull, profane: -
But scribble on, and land the tinsel pelf
That apes the transcendental! Sure thy reign
Endures not: soon upon the dusty shelf
Thy weightiest tomes shall moulder. Hope is vain
Of change in thee, until this rule prevail,
That men, not shades, commend us, or assail.

The vague Anonymous, that shield of folly,
'Neath which glib common-place doth spout and prate,
This is a theme, in sooth, for melancholy:
Oh, is not change at hand? - Give answer, fate!
But cease! Back to the woodbine and the holly!
One more fresh echo of the strains elate,
Which in first youth flow'd freely, gladness bringing:
Believe not that the world is tired of Binging:

The concluding verse is again more gentle and runs thus.

Take these poor snatches, these untutor'd rhymes,

These simple artless echoes of Life's May:
Take them, and if they once recall the times
Of your heart's childhood, cast them not away!
Count not my plainness nor my gladness crimes,
But wish me well, and like me for my lay:
With hearts like yours would I alliance claim,
And seek far rather love, your love, than fame.

I think it well to add here the *Fly-Leaf* which preceded the *Dedication*. Alas, it only made bad worse.

*Fly Leaf*

Forgive, forgive, the boldness of the strain!
Neglect a recklessness of mood engenders
That rises up against a world's disdain,
Urge you, - 'With ocean waifs contest in vain;
Jost on the sand, slow welter such offenders?

Beside, you boast no monster-births of rhyme,
No firework metaphors to whiz and glitter;
You value Art; your verses' pace keeps time;
Exaggeration makes not your Sublime:
The public must be cold, the critics bitter!'
Friends, tow'rds most critics just is your severity;
Nine times in ten, their eulogies condemn:
Simplicity they rate for 'bald austerity';
Bombast they land as 'Genius' frank temerity':
Believe, I never look'd for bays from them.

But, for the public, - doubt not, generous hearts,

Are many in this British clime and nation,
To whom, ‘spite all detraction’s dwarfish arts,
I trust my cause. Till love from life departs,
Earth shall not slight one genuine inspiration.

How truly the critics of that day were gauged in the above lines: It was well that their measure should have been taken once for all. No amount of deference could have won them, for their taste was perverted. Defiance, if not the wisest course, brought a melancholy compensation to the fore-doom’d. And, after all, shades, not men, were assailed. The poet detested anonymity, above all in criticism, though himself constantly compelled to have recourse to it or else to keep silence. *Spring* has never gone beyond a first edition. Its author has left directions for a second edition, varying in some ways from the first, and especially in respect of omitting the attacks upon the critics. He did not look forward to any lasting feud. By the very fact of these omissions the poet has made the ‘amende honorable’ to Messieurs the critics in the present and the future. Also his action in this matter is tantamount to the admission that to arm a small vessel, designed only to dance over the waters, with big guns is a mistake; and besides - here I desire to emphasise - every generation of critics is not bound to go wrong, so may not demand a broadside. The guilty generation slumbers; peace be to its ashes!

There is the less need for further quotations from *Spring* because there are but few chapters of this memoir which are not enriched by some lines taken from it. Let me however here name a few favorites of which no mention has been made hitherto. Such are *Night, a Rhapsody*; An *Opium-Smokers’s Vision*; *Fairy-Land*; *The Young Nun’s Dream*; *Napoleon*, &c. &c. - All the author’s earliest inspirations are to be found in *Spring* the whole poetry of his youth, or nearly so. For me, I find in handfuls of primroses, and cowslips, bluebells too, and very likely some daisies and buttercups -

possibly even a dandelion or two. The critics who neglected *Spring* may of course have been quite right, but I cannot believe it. If, when the new edition comes out, a new generation of critics should persist in lightly esteeming it, I shall refrain - if living - from further lamentations. Some convictions however are too engrained to be ever parted with. For me, if for none beside, the book will remain full of unaffected beauty from end to end.

I have said that further quotations are needless, but does the innocent reader conclude on that account that I cannot find excellent reasons for making any number of exceptions? Such an exception, as I conceive, should prove what I may term the graceful ornamentation to be found here and there in the volume. The poet has named the principal division of *Spring* respectively *March and April Ditties* and *Echoes of May-tide*. At the head of the former division occur these lines:

> Gushes of blithe, heart-music,
> Notes which critic ear may wrong,
> Like the lively April breezes,
> Dancing leaves and flowers among, -
> Sighing, smiling, weeping, laughing,
> Toying, flirting, nothing long, -
> Sportive, plaintive, heartsome throng,-
> Lo the Twilight hour of Song!

This is what I mean by ‘ornamentation’ whilst, prefixed to the second division, stands the following descriptive verse:

> Now the silvery twilight blendeth
> With the riper light of Morn;
> Human hearts and hopes are waking,
> And the reaper reaps the corn,

And the merchant opes the ledger,
And the huntsman winds the horn;
Lo, another day is born,
Yes, another day is born!

Though habitually careless, the poet has decked out daintily his beloved early rhymes, caressing as it were even the title-page as follows:

*Spring*

'Thus we salute thee with our early song.'

'Hail, all ye happy hours,
March winds and April showers,
And you, fresh May-tide flowers!'

And I think I shall do well to add here a poetic retrospect.

*Backward and Onward. 1850.*

Songs, in my spring-tide chanted,
Caught ye from morning's prime,
Some few glad rays, despite that haze
Which clings to such early time?
When the shades o'er the vales are creeping,
And slowly upward guide,
And the dews of the morn are weeping
Young pearls for the day-god's bride?

Oh, there is a fresh life-feeling
Which shouts through the glad boy-mind,

Each breeze comes fraught with happy thought;
Each flower has a greeting kind.
Yet let me not join in the chorus
That mourns o'er life's season flown!
Earth's harvest is still before us,
And still must Hope's seed be sown.

Yes, this is the poet's glory,
Whatever life's cares may prove, -
Through night and gloom to keep the bloom
Of the heart, of each early love.
Still, still, let me praise thee, All-Giver,
That young is my soul as then;
That hope's glad end buoyant river
Still freshens my strife with men.

My strife? - Say my peaceful labours!
Still prize I the morning sun,
The young fresh flowers, the May-tide bowers,
The need to be sought and won!
And still, too, my spirit gloweth
The weal of race to see:
May that God, who my weakness knoweth,
Make me all which I long to be!

And yet let me add the three opening verses of

*Epilogue, 1853*

And now, ye children of my youth, I leave ye
To a rude world, too likely to misheed:

Ye gentle blossoms, no green leaves shall shield ye;
How should fame's sunshine e'er bestow your need?
Fresh violets please us in their deep recesses,
But tulips only gleam where sunshine blesses.

Now bards who woo the lyre to notes more tender,
Perchance more true, shall bear the wreath away;
Whilst I, wild fancy's thrall, a rash offender,
May stand aside, how far less bless'd than they: -
Yet let not envy or repining wake:
Much hast thou won that none can from thee take.

The joy of fresh conception, the delight,
The bold, free fervour of the hour of song;
The fairy scenes that throng the inward sight,
The bounding thoughts that bear the heart along:
And if some springtide buds were immature
Autumn brings harvest: wait thou, and endure!

In spite of this calm and reasonable tone of resignation the failure of *Spring* plunged thorns and stings of disappointment into the author's mind. To be sure, nothing quite crushed him, and he found healing and consolation in ministerial work. He even wrote again and again because he could not help it. But for all that, the discouragement was profound. What he wrote thenceforth was written more or less despondingly; in any case, the stimulus of praise was wanting. What hopes we of the family had bound up with *Spring*! How well I recall the poet presenting a copy of *Spring* - only out that day - to the daughter of the house at an evening party. How bright and hopeful he looked! Ay, and in spite of that which I have just written, heart and countenance were to remain bright and hopeful for many a year.

To return to Soho, and to St. Mary's district. A letter from Canon Nugent Wade, bearing date March 12, 1888, informs me of one or two points concerning which I was in doubt, and also bears pleasing testimony to the subject of this *Memoir*. The Canon writes:-

> "Your brother preached his first sermon at S. Mary's on the 15th February 1852 and his last on February the 26th 1854. As to why he left S. Mary's, as well as I can remember, it was on the ground of his being distressed at the extent of poverty, which he was unable to relieve without drawing too much on his mother's resources. I have only to add with regard to your brother's ministry at S. Mary's, that he was most ardently devoted to the work, in every way to instruct and improve the people, indefatigable in his exertions for their welfare. He used sometimes, after the regular evening service, to reassemble the people at 9 o'clock, and give them a familiar lecture. I shall be delighted to see your *Memoir* of one whom I so highly esteemed and valued".

There is an interesting record of Archer Gurney's parish visits whilst in Soho embodied in an article contributed by him to the *English Review*. That it is autobiographical is beyond question, and therefore I shall quote from it freely. See *English Review* for October, 1852, being the article which opens the No., and entitled *Parochial Visitation*.

> 'Miserably housed, large families rarely occupying more than one apartment, never more than two (with some few extraordinary exceptions) father, mother, boys and girls, from the age of twenty to that of the infant in arms, all living, eating and drinking, and sleeping in one low and narrow necessarily very dirty room. In a large London parish we only know of some half dozen exceptions! Self-respect becomes virtually impossible; religious habits seem, if possible, to be still more so; good temper is preserved with the utmost difficulty, nay,

humanly speaking, it cannot be preserved in the great majority of instances; there is no shadow, in fine, of ease or of comfort! Can you wonder, O stern moralist: that the mother of such a family, condemned to drudge from morning to night, in such a fetid atmosphere, with bad smells all about her, an open sewer immediately beneath her window, filth grimed in the very walls and floors, should escape to the gin-palace, to seek in the intoxicating draught a momentary relaxation from that dull monotonous weight of wretched poverty which perpetually hangs about her, and weighs her to the dust? But so, you say, she makes herself poorer. Granted: but could you live, think you, without some pleasures, some enjoyment, however innocent and simple? This poor creature has none, save this; one which is at once her only solace and her bitterest bane. Or, take the case of the labouring man, who has risen with the sun, and gone forth to his (doubtless) healthful toils. Remember what air he has slept in on the night before, remember the home he has to return to, the total absence of ease, or quiet, or cleanliness, or comfort of any kind, the certainty that he will find a slatternly wife and filthy children in a close and fetid atmosphere where every breath is poison, and then condemn him, if you can (we cannot), when he resorts to the alehouse on the way: Where else is he to repair? You have no public gardens for him, where, by the payment of a penny, or some such small coin, he could obtain entrance and even take his wife and children with him for a stroll to hear a band of music play, and purchase a cheap meal of tea or coffee, and bread and butter, or fruit and milk, such gardens as are to be found throughout the length and breadth of Germany. Your theatres again (for we will even mention them) are noisy, glaring places, redolent of gas and ail abominations, thorough contrasts to the quiet, soberly-lighted well ventilated German theatre, in which it is really a pleasure to sit, and to which the poorest frequently resort; with this all-important difference between the two, that the one terminates at half-past nine and the other at twelve o’clock:

for in Germany going to the play is really a natural and healthful recreation; in England it is destructive of health and injurious to the morals, especially, of course, in the case of penny theatres, which are of abomination. Where, we ask once more, is the working man to go for recreation? Even your churches are all closed.

If troubles arising from incompatibilities of temperament and haste of temper are experienced even by the wealthy in their wider dwellings, think, reader, what evils must necessarily accrue, where all are confined in one narrow and dirty chamber by night and day. Can you suppose that under such circumstances the use of passionate epithets and bitter reproaches will be avoided? And how, think you, is the innocence of childhood to survive? How are children to respect, or how are they likely to obey, the parents whom they hear so frequently abusing one another? How is private prayer to be maintained in such a household? You, dear Madam, who circulate your tracts and pronounce your censures with such an air of mild authority and wisdom, do you really think in your heart of hearts, that the mother of the family is so inexcusable as you say she is, because she does not keep her children in order and rule her household carefully? “Oh, that woman is a drunkard, I know; I saw her in a state of intoxication with my own eyes; she shall never again have a shilling of mine!”. O Christian! dost thou judge as thou wouldst be judged? Think of thy own infirmities; think of thy own pleasures, of thine own social happiness; and then consider the wretched lot of this miserable creature; and, believe us, you will never reform her by severity! Strive to amend her lot; and then, by God’s grace, she may, and possibly will, reform herself. But in the meanwhile be charitable, be over kind, be blind, if you so will! Run the risk of encouraging vice, rather than that of leaving a fellow-creature to despair.

The parish priest, or the curate, as he is called (for every priest has bound himself by the most solemn obligation to devote his hours and days to the saving of souls, and wherever a man's line may happen to be cast, there he is bound to work) is, in our judgement, under the most positive obligation to make himself personally acquainted, as far as possible, with the individuals resident in his parish or district, with them, their wants, and their distresses; and this he can only do by visiting, on some system, from street to street, and house to house, and room to room, and in the largest of parishes we cannot admit him to be exempted from this duty; he is still bound to work as far as his force will carry him. It is astonishing, indeed, how much may be accomplished this way by an honest resolve, and a certain amount of moral courage. In large city parishes, doubtless it will be quite necessary to call in the assistance of laymen. xxx None, however, can speak to the labouring classes with such a mixture of familiarity and command as the clergy; they stand at once in some measure, by virtue of their office, on a level with the poorest of the poor, so as to have the right to elicit their sympathies and demand their confidences; theirs is the privilege of lowliness, if they knew how to employ it, whilst they retain at the same time the dignity of their office, and that social superiority which gentlemanly manners, and the sense of a liberal education, must confer. A clergyman cannot lower himself, God be praised for it, so long as he acts in a religious spirit, by placing himself on an equality with the poor, by extending to them the hand of friendship, by asking their advice even in practical matters, by speaking to them as a workman to his fellow-workmen!

Many houses have small shops below, grocers, pawnbrokers, &c. The clergyman, who intends to devote the next two or three hours to visiting for the first time, from room to room, in a certain number of these houses, enters one of the shops for information. The shopkeeper in all

probability gives the names, or at least the greater part of them, which the clergyman notes in his pocket-book, somewhat after this fashion, “Jones, Front Kitchen - Phillipps, Back - Wilson, First Floor Front - Clements, Back” &c; and thus armed, he proceeds to devote the next half hour or so, it may be, to the making acquaintance with seven or eight new families of the working classes in the house.

A certain amount of moral courage is doubtless requisite in such an undertaking; and desirable, we should say, is a flexibility of mind and disposition, a readiness for all comers. At least, these qualities are useful, though not indispensible; for it is probably that sincere and earnest piety, and true love of the brethren, will more than supply their absence. The clergyman, however, must not be one who is easily daunted or repelled, for he is certain to meet with some rebuffs in the course of his peregrinations. Possibly on this very occasion he may enter a room, in the first instance, where he finds two or three men working together, at shoemaking, or some such employment, who will not remove their hats from their heads, or rise from their seats to greet him when he enters. Of such rudeness he must of course take no notice whatsoever; nay, not even pretend to remark it; but advance unconcernedly, saying, “Mr Watkins, I believe?”, having taken care to refer, before opening the door to the names on his list; (it is a great point to know the name; it seems to give you some standing as an acquaintance, and nobody, however poor and solitary, is ever surprised at being known:) probably a surly “Yes, sir” , will be grunted forth by way of reply; or, perhaps “I’m Mr Watkins: what may you want with him?”. “Merely to make your acquaintance, as Mr - - the clergyman of this district” is of course the natural reply; “I hope trade is pretty flourishing”. This, if said in a cheerful and friendly tone, is wellnigh certain to affect manners for the better. “Take a chair, sir” he says. The clergyman does so, and enters on a conversation, usually discussing the

present prospects of business, the amount of wages, and so forth. After five minutes of this chat the pastor feels that he can ask without abruptness after the wife and children, and what schools are frequented by the latter, and mentions perhaps the parish school. A directly religious conversation is not, we think, usually to be recommended, unless some opening present itself. Sometimes such an opening may be made in a half jocular way by one of the men visited: “So you’re Mr - - ; we don’t trouble church much in our business”. “Ah, don’t you? The more’s the pity. I do not think your life can be so happy in this world as not to need the comfort of religion”. Thus opened, a conversation may of course prove useful. Generally, a kind and genial tone is to be recommended; it seems useless to express horror at a way of ‘living without God in the world’, which is almost universal round about you; nor is it desirable to commence by quoting many Scripture texts, since it is too possible that the man you speak to may be disposed to question the authority of God’s word, and you lay yourself open to the suspicion of cant. The essential is of course to place yourself, as far as you can, in the situation of those to whom you speak, and employ such arguments as they are likely to understand, taking care to show that you feel with them, all the while, and do not judge them the severely. To attempt to enter into further details of such a conversation would be tedious: We may say, however, that we have known instances in which the clergyman has been yet more surlily received than this by working men, and yet has parted from them, after a quarter of an hour, on the very best of terms, they insisting on shaking hands once, or even twice, with him, and manifestly feeling more kindly towards the cause of Christian truth than they did before he entered their chamber.

We have come on many families who were starving, or all but starving, whom a little temporary relief has extricated from the greater part of their difficulties; but the circumstances were scarcely of sufficient

moment to warrant special enumeration.

To descend to particulars, however, we have fallen in, thus, with a poor young woman, a widow, the daughter of a highly respectable shopkeeper, left in the most destitute circumstances, with three young children, Being rather handsome, of course, the danger of her situation was very great. Her children were starving before her eyes; proposals of a vile nature were made to her, by one who promised to help her to get the two elder out in the world; in a weak hour she yielded. Of course, the seducer soon departed, taking care to leave no trace of his whereabouts, and breaking all his promises. When we first called on this poor creature, a little child had just been born into the world, and born blind, the fruit of this intrigue. The mother was in a state bordering on despair; cast off by all her friends and relatives, and almost utterly destitute. In the same house lived another woman, of very bad character. She had formed an acquaintance with this woman, and the only possible end could be foreseen. But, by God's grace who sent the helper at the right hour, with a little judicious money-aid, but, above all, by sympathy and kindness and encouragement, this wanderer was reclaimed, or seems to have been altogether reclaimed; and, despite of cruel treatment subsequently, on the part of her kinsfolk, and many great privations, she has since persisted in a course of strict propriety; and, it is to be hoped, may yet redeem herself from her sunk condition even in this life, and become a useful member of society. Such a case as this is indeed consolatory to a clergyman. What parish priest would not join in the Apostle's exclamation, 'I have no greater joy than to hear, (or see) that my children walk in truth?'

Again, quite casually, we have entered a small chamber, where a child, a boy of some ten years of age, lay dying in his narrow bed. He had been asking for a clergyman all the night; yet too probably a clergyman

would not have been fetched in time, had he not thus opportunely made his appearance. This boy had been at the parish school for the last two or three years; but he had lived in one of the very worst parts of London, where drinking, swearing, and fighting were the ordinary occupations of the inhabitants, close to a small cattle-market, which the windows of his chamber overlooked. He had lost his father early; and his mother was a hardworking but thoroughly irreligious woman; and yet, marvellous to relate, this child was a simple-hearted, innocent, lowly saint of God. He clasped the clergyman's hand in his, and said, "O do read, sir! do pray!" "What shall I read to you?" – "About our blessed Lord". "Do you remember Him, then?" "O, yes; and how He died for me!". And then he repeated one or two sample texts, but without the slightest admixture of formalism or affectation; nothing that the veriest scoffer could have fancied cant. The mother afterwards said that this boy of hers had always been pious; always fond of play and merriment, too; yet, when his playmates used bad words, he would not say anything, indeed, but always went away from them. When she was tired at night she would often forget her prayers, she said, and fling herself down on the bed quite worn out; but then he would wake up anxiously and say, "Oh, mother, mother, you haven't prayed to God tonight!" and not let her rest till she rose up and did so.

What a privilege did we not feel it to kneel by the bed-side, and receive almost the parting blessing of such a secret child of God as this, kept in the midst of a worse fire than the burning fiery furnace of Babylon, from the influence of spiritual wickedness, by the unseen presence of the Son of God! Yet this privilege also was only gained in consequence of parochial visitation from room to room.

Beautiful, most beautiful is it, we cannot refrain from observing, to see such a living record as this of the power of Christianity in the very

centre of mass of carelessness and blasphemy and sin! Wonderful to think that the Protecting Arm should always have been upheld above the head of this young child! Surely, the Lord dwells, indeed, about and around His own people, even as the mountains stand about Jerusalem?'

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The article from which I quote consists of 37 closely-printed pages and is interesting throughout. It should be reprinted some day, but I have not space for further extracts. This only would I say: May it not seem a pity that Archer Gurney's ministerial life was not passed from first to last in a great London parish? No doubt, he did excellent work elsewhere; but he - the poet and the thinker - was eminently fitted to be the apostle of the slums and courts and alleys of London. It must have rent his very heart to say goodbye to the work in Soho.

# Chapter XXVIII
# The Transcendentalists. Maud. Correspondence. 1854-5

No sooner ~~had it become~~ was it evident that *Spring*, the well-loved volume of early poetry, was blighted mishandled and left for dead by the critics, than its cruelly disappointed author gave a vent to his feelings in verse.

‘Indignatio facit versus.’

His *Satire* with the long name, *The Transcendentalists*, was no doubt written as fast as pen could be put to paper. It was the fashion at that time in literary circles to believe in the poetical greatness of Messieurs Bailey, Alexander, Smith, Bigge, and Sydney Yednys - that incomparable quartette - how far superior to that other quartette of which Byron fell foul in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* viz. Scott, Southey, Wordsworth and Coleridge! There was an exaggeration about their style which was held by the critics to promise the greatest things, if not actually to fulfil them. And as a melancholy consequence, a natural poet, free from their ‘rich luxuriance’, had the less chance of gaining a hearing. Archer Gurney dubbed these men and their congeners The Transcendentalists, because they transcended sense, rhythm, taste, and feeling. Stung by their victory and his own defeat he wasted upon them some good powder and shot. At the same time he wrote a hundred kind and genial things in his Satire about other men. In Chapter XXIII I have already given various extracts from *The Transcendentalists*. Here let me give a few more. I quote from the 2nd Edn. - The following lines may serve for invocation:

O Taste! O Sympathy! - amazed, we call:
Where are ye fled, if still ye <u>are</u> at all?

In some few rural nooks, some pastoral shades,
And in the hearts of some sweet English maids,
(Childhood and woman still will feel the true)
There, at your last frail outposts, linger you.

The author proceeds to reproach Tennyson for getting an example which, however beautiful in itself, was sure to call forth exaggeration in his imitators. But note how different is the tone of this reproach from that adopted by Byron towards the great poets of his day.

Thee, Tennyson, despite thy genius real,
Thee must we thank for this intense 'Ideal';
To thee we owe these tenebrific strains,
This glut of nonsense, this sad lack of brains,
This mystical parade, insane pretence,
That never, never, deviates into sense.
'Tis true, thy Muse pure feeling's deeps has traced,
With all the gifts of tenderness is graced,
An undisputed tragic power possesses,
And yet is rich in music and caresses,
Owns every charm to poet could belong,
Except the natural melody of song.
But, O! thine imitators - O, the crew
That bray hoarse echoes, critic-laurell'd too!
Thy strains oracular bred these men's ravings:
And then the hapless hyperbolic cravings,
Which all the sons of mediocrity,
The *criticlings,* have haply stole from thee.
Ah, thou hast much to answer for, poor Bard!
But then, thy penance, that to bear were hard.
&c.

Then next, the satirist, lays his finger on the culminating mischief - as he accounts it - of the Laureate, - on *Maud*.

Alack, ill-satisfied with such renown,
Thyself hast lept the murk abysses down,
Hast proved thy own faint soul by humbug awed
In the grim rubbish of a thing called ‘Maud.’
We mourn thy crime, still more thy weakness rue,
And groan, ‘The Laureate’s transcendental too.’

I must now quote the passage which may be said to form the original cause of the Satire.

But who may speak the numbers of the herd
That claim the glories of the mocking-bird?
To whom such bays by vast acclaim were given?
Advance, great Bailey, storm-and-thunder-riven,
And on illimitable pinions sweep
Through the orbicular and mazèd deep!
Wreathe all the stars around that forehead high!
Thy genius, vast Colossus, scales the sky,
And takes possession of the universe,
In rhymes - I swear, no Hume could fancy worse.

Near thy imagination, all-aflame,
Pindar or Aeschylus must page for tame.
But one can equal thee in power or pith,
And that’s the poet - Alexander Smith!

O Alexander! Alexander O!

Beyond thee can the false ideal go?
Such agonies, such raptures, such outpourings,
Such most magnificent aesthetic roarings;
Such cravings of young gentlemen sublime,
To flood with Austral beams the vaults of Time!
O Alexander, tame those bursts of song!
Yet all the worlds to such a Muse belong:
How prune those wings, outsoaring emptiest wind,
And leaving common sense in dust behind?
No Alexander, how while swarms applaud,
And all but hail thee for a poet-god,
How should'st thou heed my hortatory strain?
Pipe on thy music, man, and pipe again!
Thou canst not pipe so shrilly, or so badly,
But critic 'bravos' shall applaud thee madly.
Let crude exaggeration but inspire,
Dulness shall stand and roast her at the fire.

Beyond this orbit soar'd one vapoury brain
Into the region of the clear Inane?
Impossible? - No boundary madness knows,
And Sydney Yednys feels yet direr throes,
Hugely audacious, mythically rash,
The thundering emperor of balder-dash.
Aytoun, the brave, in fierce spasmodic verse
Labour'd, with scant success, to scribble worse.
The lion, though he strive to chew the grass
Can never bray as loudly as the ass,
And o'er 'Firmilian's' most bewildering rigs
Art's influence cower'd. We cried, 'This can't be Bigg's.'
But how souls train'd in tame Convention's school

Should frenzied ecstacies like these befool?
Immeasurable rant and raving rhyme,
How should the critics find these things sublime?
‘Tis that minds, trained mid vapours dense and dun,
Have lost all measure for the Beautiful,
And from their stupefaction, coldly quiet,
Can only be awakened by a riot!

So critics, who the true sublime condemn
(Simplicity and strength are blanks to them)
Anxious to prove their prosy souls romantic
Look for a frantic theme, and then go frantic.
This seeming contradiction must remain
Convention’s rule - iced heart and fever’d brain;
Thus is Time’s chariot dragged along the heather
By tameness and insanity together.

But lives there, then, you’ll ask, no critic true,
Who yields to folly, as to worth, its due?
Endowed with sympathy for aught that’s great,
Able and willing to appreciate,
Yet prompt to blame the vicious and the vile?
Who with the storm could frown, the sunshine smile?
Nay, heav’n forbid, that you should take me thus!
Such master-spirits, just, wise, generous,
Still wave the wand of empire, - let us hope,-
And here award the wreath, and there the rope.
Owns not the Thunderer’s self a valorous pen,
Which judged a *Maud* with sage impartial ken?
And do not single souls for Nature yearn,
Which would speak freely, Should the rabble burn?

Nay none the Critic's office more esteem,-
His call, a keenly penetrating beam,
Through mists which modest merit screen from sight
To pour his cheering mild maturing light
And blast pretenders in their pride of power, -
Than I, who seem'd to mock in this rash hour.
'Tis that the vague Anonymous pretence
Has levelled pompous ignorance and sense,
Confounding riffraff with the mind's nobility,
And yielding all a sham infallibility.

But rests the land of bards denuded quite?

Here follows genial mention of a chain of then living bards. Take a few links of the chain:

Lives not a Trench, whose chaste and gracious Muse
Entwined pure lilies, tinged with morning's dews?
Thrilled not a Keble sublunary sphere
With chants which Seraphim might stop to hear?

And pour'd not forth in accents fresh and strong,
An Isaac Williams his adoring song?

Woke not an Arnold, son of worthiest sire,
Legends of old romance with living fire
While Classic moonlight, tender, chaste, serene
Clothed the fair landscape with a tenderer green?

Nay, even a Kingsley, stern as fate or death, Enchains our hearts to sweet Elizabeth,

And, while he woos Convention's drowsy curse, Observes the immemorial laws of verse.

Has not a Knowles revived our drama's prime?
Has not a Browning made each heart's pulse chime?

~~Here, because the one only line devoted to Robert Browning - 'Has not a Browning made each heart's pulse chime?' - falls altogether short of Archer Gurney's discriminating admiration for the author of 'Bells and Pomegranates', let me set down what follows, being only one instance in a thousand out of many in which Gurney – who on occasion can find fault himself – takes up the cudgel for Browning.~~

~~'I can't in the least agree with you about Browning; you can scarcely have studied him; he is the most refined and aristocratic poet, in my judgment, I ever read, save perhaps Grillparzer, despite the audacity of 'Pippa passes', and one or two of his dramatic lyrics which no doubt give an impression of coarseness. I know fastidious women who think him one of the most graceful and refined of poets – witness 'The Blot on the Scutcheen', despite its painful subject, witness 'Colombe's Birthday.' *From Archer Gurney's Correspondence*.~~

Has not his peerless wife taught England's soul
Leap to her Children's Cry with mild control?
&c. &c.

The author was apt to read aloud the following passage with a smile:

And now - forgive the daring of my strain, -
In Churches is Convention apt to reign?
Thus did a keen observer counsel youth,

Nor were his strictures wholly void of truth.

(The Prayers be loudly read with much decorum;
Stirring discourses folks don't want, they bore 'em!
Reign equable and orthodox ability,
While snugly pewed sleeps calm respectability!
Would you succeed, then hoard this precept sage Rise not above the level of your age,
e dim and dull as London's dense November
And ne'er say aught that mortal could remember!
Great are the mysteries of common-place,
Be sure, you'll please the Rector, and 'his Grace',
And also gratify the Alderman: -
Now you who know devise a safer plan!

One way indeed to earn the big world's praises,
Besides the droning forth of leaden phrases, Remains, to mountebank it pulpit-drumming,
Outcalvin Calvin, and Outcumming Cumming.'

But the author's honest appreciation for the good and the true made him follow on with these gentler thoughts:

Doubtless, a nobler spirit life hath woke
And stirs Convention's legendary yoke;
And transcendental pulpit-rant no more
Bids wondering myriads tremble at its roar.
The time hath been when coldness reign'd supreme,
Save where secretarian zeal woke flickering gleam;
When (as in Art), from chill Convention's cant
More ardent spirits fled to worship rant.

Now seems a happier flame through hearts to glide,
And party-bounds less anxiously divide;
A myriad priests our Temple's guard
With earnest wills for more than earth's reward,
Bent rich and poor to gather round the shrine
And buoy the souls of men to spheres divine.
Oh, proud were I, who traced this murmuring strain,
To rank the last, the lowest of their train.

Then, before long, comes ~~what thousands have held to be~~ the ~~beautiful~~ noble tribute to Sims Reeves, which has been quoted already in Ch. XXIII.

In Reeves the rarest qualities combine
&c;

followed by the lines (also there quoted) on Howard Glover, the composer.

And now let me pass to the conclusion of the 1st Fytte of the satire, no longer a satire - rather a ~~most genial~~ an outpouring of praise.

Meanwhile, two living names shall grace the lay,
Our Age's pride, Dickens and Thackeray.
Nor ween, because in sportive blithsome guise
They read their lessons we may these misprize:
Whatever form free Genius will to bear,
Its rays must haply purify the air.
O, would this verse could happier tribute yield
To those, whose wit was sword, whose worth is shield!

One with right earnest zeal, despising scorn,
Paints Britain's poor and pleads for souls forlorn:

Aye, while his merriest jests the surface hit,
The deepest pathos mingles with his wit;
And all that's fashionably mean and small
And heartless, - how he kicks the narrow ball!

For thee, great Satirist, who snobs hast made
And modern snoblife tremble 'neath thy blade,
That trenchant blade, which bared in Justice' cause,
Hath pall'd Convention's heart and clipt its claws,
I know, thy soul, which Humbug awes in vain,
Will yield some secret response to the strain;
That if a world of fools conspired to burn me
Thy voice would whisper, 'Well aimed, Archer Gurney!'

So here I'll end this monitory strain,
Content to reap the harvest of disdain
If Heav'n decree, and Fate should frown, not smile:
The hour must come, and I can wait awhile,
In future times approving sage may say,
When havoc's dogs were slipp'd he stood at bay,
And though his strong desire his power surpassed, His aim was noble, and 'twas reached at last.

———

I believe I do well to quote so much - and yet more - of the satire because it is very characteristic of its author, ~~Hereby~~ and doubtless some fiery indignation was thus worked off. ~~One omission is all mention of our modern painters. Probably there was no school of art that the satirist desired to show up, seeing that he was proud of our living English artists, whilst placing at their head for lofty ideality and noble execution Holman Hunt.~~ Would that he had taken the satire again in hand before his end! One line

towards the close of Fytte first impresses me sadly, and may have struck some readers:

‘The hour must come, and I can wait awhile.’

The hour here spoken of is of course the hour of recognition. It did not come during the poet’s life-time. Will it come after death? I am foolish enough to fancy that it can matter to him even in Paradise.

*Fytte the Second* has many striking passages, of which I can only reproduce a few. Some of it is unchastened, but all is strong, though written at express speed.

Of the critics he writes –

This race so long despotic sway enjoyed,
So long unquestioned, ravaged and destroyed,
That aught attempt their empire to invade,
Is held rank sacrilege in man or maid.
‘True, Byron once presumed the blow to strike,
But are you Byron, man, to dare the like?
Know your own place, nor impiously presume
To wave a torchlight through the sacred gloom!’
Yea, those who soar in soul above the dust,

Yet to the craft pertain, think wrath most just,
And strangely will appropriate to themselves
The satire aim’d at less illustrious elves.
‘A poet’, cry they, ‘who can bark and bite,
And dares his judge, the critic, to indict,
Has really placed himself without the band;

Nor praise nor censure suits such impious man.

What the critics said of Alexander Smith.

His lack of reason they ascribed to youth;
‘Time will teach measure’, quoth they, ‘art, and truth:
Meanwhile his similes sublimely stray,
His stars would form a second milky way,
And if we scan no meaning in the song
It has a mighty sound, and cadence strong.
True, there’s no whole, no one complete effect;
But that from youth ‘twere cruel to expect.
Some single lines there are, both bold and sweet,
And startling epithets at times we meet
And starry images oh, ask not which!
‘Tis all confusion, but confusion rich;
A Delphic maze without prosaic plan:
We’ll hope the genial youth shall make a man!’

A grand mistake in criticism this:
Who judge by lines must always judge amiss,
A thousand painted bits of glass may shine,
But worthless rest they if they won’t combine
To frame one window with a free design.
The first essentials for the work of art
Are central unity that blends each part,
An innate taste to work a mild control,
And commonsense that balances the whole.
Then let imagination heav’nward soar,
But earth’s foundation must be rear’d before,
And they who ‘twixt the twain would ride the air

As ill as thoughtless Phaeton shall fare.

Mere fancies will not suffice.

The power to cull from nature's beauties fair
Apt images, believe me, is not rare.
If these as glittering gawds are but employ'd
Flimsy gilt-spangles, Taste will soon be cloy'd.
Such illustrations secondary place,
Assume at best, they add a happy grace,
Wreathing their flow'rs around the column's base:
But then the base itself, must firmly stand;
Flow'rs in the air will hang not at command;
And should the blossoms artificial be,
The column's best without the trumpery!

Why, fancies, such as these, will swarm like bees,
A million fold, chance flow'rs, cloud-images,
Round the true bard, and he ne'er stoop to seize,
Conscious his Muse has hymned a worthier song,
He lets them glitter past, the garish throng,
Nor seeks her simpler beauties to enhance
By flow'rs and gems, the youngest born of chance,
Yet takes them, when his theme inspires their birth, And rates them nor below, nor o'er their worth.

Tennyson once more.

But seems it harsh, perchance to hunt the hare
While the red lion snuffs the forest air?
Should I pursue an Alexander's track,

While Alfred glares his calm defiance back?
Ah, Alfred, Alfred, gentlest child of song,
Rich in meek ditties, in bland pastorals strong,
Is't thou who savage rhymes hast pished and phawed?
Is't thou who wrot'st this rude barbaric Maud?'
This fierce mock-passion, aim'd at boys' applause,
These hideous rhymes, these leafless hips and haws,
This Locksley-hall-man with a wider scope,
Whose soul's desert were verily a rope,
This paling maundering over harmless flow'rs
Which rose and lily strips of Nature's dow'rs,
And last, this sanguine cry for blood, red blood,
To wash away the deep-encrusted mud
Alike from century and thy hero's soul -
What call'st thou this? Is't not a nameless whole?

One more quotation, being the conclusion to the whole matter.

Oh, nobler souls, who guard the Aonian mount,
Believe not I your office worthless count:
Of fashion could awhile the thoughtful sway,
It shall not, when you cast your masks away,
Then shall each worthier critic reap his due
Then shall fair fame prepare her bays for you;
Not poets only shall be laurell'd then,
But thinkers too shall take their stand as men,
Not lost among the miscellaneous crowd,
Not wrapped and buried in oblivion shroud,
But reaping all the dues their toil should gain,
And sharing wise, though scarce despotic reign.
Believe, 'tis in your interest I speak,

Nor anger on these truthful verges wreak.
If on some points of taste I ween'd you wrong,
The worthiest whirl'd by fashion's tide along, To err is human, therefore spare the song:
A noble nature frankly will forgive
Most noble Judges, let the Poet live!

My brother was the recipient of hundreds of interesting letters from distinguished men and women, of which letters, owing to some carelessness on his part and still more perhaps owing to endless moves, comparatively few only are extant. Here is a survival which comes in naturally at this stage.

From Matthew Arnold
28 July 1854, Dover.

I have just received your interesting letter and volume of Poems (*Songs of the Present*) on my return from a short absence upon the continent. The latter I have only had time to glance at - but I was acquainted with your former volume which bore the title of *Spring*, and had formed some conception of the nature of your views and efforts.

In spite of the vigour of much of your satire, and although I agree with you that those against whom you address it are, most of them, on a false road, we must not, I think, forget that some of them, Alexander Smith for instance, shew a richness and power of temperament and a musicalness of expression which are after all essential to the poet, and which may some day, if they turn happily, do great things for them. But I quite agree with you that the nonsense talked in the meanwhile by their critics is both mischievous and provoking.

I must ask you to allow me to send you the second edition of my Poems, from a few words prefixed to which you will see that I was myself conscious of having omitted to apply what was said in my first Preface to lyric Poetry - an omission which you so well put your finger upon. All your remarks on this point in your letter seem to me most interesting and suggestive, even where I do not entirely agree with them. I did not know you had noticed either of my little-regarded anonymous volumes. What you say about the power of the critics at the present day is quite true: it must be so, while the reading habits of the public are what they are. I attribute the greater success of my last volume entirely to an article in the *Times*. None of us however can, I think, just now expect to do very much: circumstances are too much against us - but we may console ourselves with what Goethe said at the end of his life - that if he had known, at 25, how much that was excellent existed already, he would have devoted himself to learning to enjoy that, and never have written a single line.
Ever sincerely Yours
M. Arnold

And here another 'survival', this time from Kingsley, penned two days later.

Bideford N. Devon
30 July 1854

My dear Gurney
I have never seen your *Songs of the Present*. I suppose they must be waiting for me in Limbo Patriae at Eversley, while I am in Devon. I shall get them in August.

The rest I will answer categorically. I did <u>not</u> write the Review on Balder-*dash* in Frazer's, and you are a very bad fellow for fancying for

a moment that it was mine. I have cut all connexion with that Mag. (and with reviewing), so I have in part taken your advice already. I think *Balder* utter bosh, and nothing to be hoped from its author whom I met in Embro.

I thought that in my *Pope and Smith* article, I had said just what you would agree to, about the very school which you abominate, and had told that hapless Smith as plainly as I could that unless he mended he would go to the devil. But I could not cut him up, because his faults, as I tried to shew, are not his own, but learnt by a self-educated working-man from the reigning school which, as I there tried to make clear, I hate as much as you do. I quite agree with what you say about Goethe. I dislike Tennysonianisms as much as you do - (shew me a trace of them in anything I have ever written!) but that cannot blind me - any more than it does you - to the genius and true poetry of the man.

On the whole I should have thought if you had read certain thoughts about *Byron and Shelley*, with which I tried to follow up what I said about Smith, that you and I should agree very well on critical points. Pope I took as the antithesis to Smith simply to shew that even he was better than the reigning windbag-and-blasphemy-school. My own feeling about Southey is very much yours, that he is underrated; but he has a great want somewhere - it seems to me in respect of real music and fire.

Now don't be angry with me any more, for I think that you have an utter misconception (no doubt through my clumsiness) of my poetic creed. If I ever publish any poems (which I often doubt, as I am so dissatisfied with what I have written,) they will be the very antipodes of the present school; and in the meanwhile, I will read yours carefully and lovingly, when they come to hand.

Yours faithfully ever

C. Kingsley.

———

Another letter from Kingsley of later date, apparently refers to the 2nd Edition of *The Transcendentalists*.

My dear Gurney

Thanks for your amusing satire, which I fear on the whole too true. I hardly think it worth your while to hit the poor creatures, though, and I think you are 'wasting honest sweat in breaking butterflies on the wheel.' If the bad poetry really had hold of the popular mind, as the Dr Urfré and Scudery school had of the French mind in 1650-60, then you could not hit too hard: but now I don't think a soul cares about it all, pro or con.

For me, I have deserted poetry, as rats do a sinking ship. I have refused to publish my poems, actually ashamed of being called a poet, of being caught in such bad company (not <u>yours</u> of course), and have taken to monosyllabic prose, as the highest achievement of man; considering modern taste so radically rotten, that I must unlearn almost all I have learnt from it, and recommence with my alphabet and Mrs. Trimmer.

As for *Maud* – it is a sad falling off. There are lovely scraps in it, most exquisite: but as a whole the world (and I) view it much as you do. I think there is but one opinion even among those who admire Tennyson most. I have said all that can be said for *Maud* in a late No. of Fraser's Mag. – I love and honour the man, as a private friend, (and so would

you if you knew him), and am in no humour to hit him as I would Balders, Baileys and other presumptuous windbags. I am glad you appreciate Browning's plays. I can tell more truths in prose than I could have done in verse, and earn ten times as much money; wherefore Parnassus has seen my retreat, - I doubt not with dry eyes. But let me hear how our parish work - immeasurably more important - goes on; and whether it still fulfils the golden reports which I heard of it last year, though the one drawback seemed that you would use yourself up too soon, and do too little by doing too much. Maurice was in serious fear for your health, so overworked (he said) you were by your own good will. – All you say of Alexander Smith is quite true, and may do him good: but really – Le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle - . 'Let the dead bury their dead, <u>But follow then me</u>' is the true watchword for us, after all.

Yours ever faithfully

C. Kingsley.

———

Here is Archer Gurney's answer to the above letter.

Buckingham
16 Oct. 1855.

Dear Kingsley

No occasion for speaking out, say you, when eight editions of this trash are called for in a few weeks? When the Press is teeming with laudations? When a work, as immeasurably superior to a wilderness of Mauds, as I cannot but believe my own '*Iphegenia*' is received with

absolute indifference? When the author of so great a work as *the Saint's Tragedy* can eulogise this trash, and declare he renounces poetry because prose pays better, and the taste of the age is vile? When will it be time to speak out then? My dear Kingsley, all this is too monstrous. It were ridiculous to affect to deny that I am very angry, and still more contemptuous. The taste of almost all English literary men is hopelessly vitiated. Nothing that is not forced and artificial imposes on them: to a Goethe, or a Schiller, or a Grillparzer, they would say 'Anybody could do that' and so to all our own genuine poets, and the Greek and Latin also. They are barbarians at heart. Where is the remedy? What hope is there, I repeat, when the author of 'the Saint's Tragedy' swells, nay, leads the chorus? Do you not see that *Maud* is morbid and silly? Do you not see how forced is all this writing about 'bloodred blossoms of war with hearts of fire'? Why this is the very thing you praise and admire. It must be forced, it must be unnatural, it must be absurd - these are the first conditions of sublimity; above all, it must be made, as I have said in the Satire. Now *Maud* is made from first to last; there is not an impulsive line in it; not one stanza written with the joy of inspiration , - as were so many passages in your own 'Saints Tragedy', such as Elizabeth's outbreak when she learns the love of Lonis, or her magnificent adjuration of the Risen Lord beneath the Crucifix. Can you not feel the difference between an art which parades itself, and an art which seems nature? Can you prefer the former, or write as if you did? What right have you, holding the position you do, to accuse the Age? You are the Age; you are one of its literary leaders and exponents; you combine in your own person many of its most marked characteristics. And you can admire nothing that is not pretentious! Now Tennyson is always pretentious. He has not an original or a creative mind, or a distinct opinion of any kind, nor has he the least lyrical impulse, the natural gift of song. He never had. All his efforts are achieved by labour; in the sweat of his brow he churns poetry, and when most

simple he is most laborious. Still he had a peculiar grace and refinement, and an (idolatrous) affection for beauty, and he has achieved much that is very exquisite. No man has praised him more warmly than myself, - yet, after all, he is only the

‘Chief Verse-Romancer of the age of brass.’

He is not a singer: dramatic earnestness and life he has; pathos and passion; and just for these very qualities he has never received due credit. No more and for today from your most cynical schoolfellow, as you may be inclined to call him.

I have left Soho from pecuniary motives - I was living entirely on my Mother and shall certainly not be worked to death here, when I am Senior Curate in a Town with some 4000 souls.

Ever dear Kingsley
Yours sincerely
Archer Gurney

P.S. The accompanying lines express my sentiments.

The lines enclosed in the letter to Kingsley were these:

I
*Ultimatum*

So then the dark lot is cast, and for nature, and beauty, and reason,
Stupidly prized by our sires, we have reap’d the Spasmodic Sublime.
Hence with your classical models, with humour, with judgment, and feeling,

Old Father Homer and all - Shakespeare and Milton go hang!
'Lear' is a tame bit, though decent, no raptures to set the world crooning,
Void to magnificent 'Balder', or still more infinite 'Maud',
Rhythm that jolts one to smithers, conjoin'd with original grammar,
These form the primary claims to genius, to boundless renown.
Ah, 'tis a pitiful madness, and makes the heart ache for man's folly –
Lower abysses of dullness ne'er can the Century sound.

———

II
*Appeal*

Farewell, your doom is rung,
Songs of the heart, that charr'd our genial sires:
A grinding agony of rhyme requires
The critic's brazen tongue.

A lava-flood of woe,
Immeasurable scorn for light, sense, good,
An ever widening, deepening, tide of blood,
That heaves and swells below.

Great God! is this the goal?
This frantic infinite whirl? This death-struck dance?
Is this earth's Poetry? this life's romance?
Deny't – deny't - O soul!

Yea, if alone stood I,
While gibbering myriads prate their false sublime,
And dead to thought, taste, reason, rhythm, rhyme,

Choir their fool-harmony -

To the blue heav'ns I'll sing
To them and theirs, nor yield the heart's freelyre:
The Beautiful shall age on age inspire,
From age to age shall ring.

———

Archer had written to me his first impressions of *Maud* so early as ~~the close of~~ July 1855.

My dear Augustus

Here is the first verse of *Maud.*

I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with bloodred heath
The red-ribb'd hedges drip with a silent horror of blood
And echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers Death.

That must be a very Irish kind of echo: Qu'en dis tu?

2.

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,
His who had given me life - O father! O God! was it well?
Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dinted into the ground;
There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell.

Did he fling himself down? who knows? for a great speculation had failed &c.

Hold, enough! you will say. Is there nothing better? Yes, some little. All is forced and unnatural but the lover's mock raptures are pretty, making allowance for affectation:

Birds in the high hall-garden
When twilight was falling,
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
They were crying and calling
&c.

Birds in our wood sang
Ringing through the valleys
Maud is here, here, here,
In among the lilies.

En avant.

I kiss'd her slender hand,
She took the kiss sedately;
Maud is not seventeen,
But she is tall and stately.

These last two lines do not fall so far short of Billy Taylor.

Here is a really pretty verse.

I know the way she went
Home with her maiden posy,
For her feet had touch'd the meadows
And left the daisies rosy.

I have no doubt one might read oneself into much of this, but it is none the less hollow for all that.

Here is the story. The hero, like a ghostly Hibberty gibbet, falls in love with a rich girl, has a private interview, brother comes up, strikes him - lover strikes again - fight, brother killed, - Lover goes mad, is cured on hearing of the War.

There are prettinesses in the volume besides, and the grand old ode on the Duke.

And now for the roar of the British critic!

*Archer.*

I will end this angry chapter with some playful lines from James Bandinel, than whom my brother had no more devoted friend. To cause his disheartened correspondent a smile he makes mincemeat of the poets of the day, actually doing for Gurney what Browning says he should like to have done for Waring, See *Bells and Pomegranates*.

*Waring*

Oh, could I have him back once more
Back with the quiet face of yore,
So hungry for acknowledgment,
x x x I'd fool him to his bent!
Feed, should not he, to heart's content? I'd say, 'to only have conceived
'Your great works, though they never progress,
'Surpasses all we've yet achieved!'
I'd lie so, I should be believed. I'd make such havoc of the claims

Of the day's distinguished names
To feast him with, as feasts an ogress
Her sharp-toothed golden-crown'd child!

———

And now for Bandinel's rhymes!

Sompting nr. Shoreham 9 June 1854

Strike, strike the lyre and raise a gladder strain
For Archer Gurney is himself again -
Once more without a blush my muse can say
Archer and Angel both begin with A,
Once more declare that goodness starts with G -
And think of Gurney goodness' self is he -
Angel of goodness thus we write
Glad, glorious, godpap of R.B.B.

xxxx
xxxx

And let me tell
That I love Sompting both and Lancing well -;
Love the green fields to roam, sweet fresh air to inhale
And listen to the peerless nightingale
Which singeth 'mongst the birds, as sweet a song
As far superior to the common throng
As thou mongst men. Montgomery like a
Bull-finch roars his wondrous torrent deep and full.
Keble a linnet warbling on a spray;
Williams a mountain thrush - Bulwer a jay -

Sweet Alfred Tennyson that pretty thing
Which when men ope a box - with artful spring
Flutters its graceful wings and gins to sing.
Sandy, great Sandy, gobbler - odious bird -
And Sydney Yendys - gander most absurd,
I like the owl that from his sullen bower
Hosts in discordant tones his thoughts of power,
Thou the true nightingale with changing throat
Stretching its compass over many a note
Gentle, majestic, deep, full tones and clear,
And aye in every key without a peer.

———

No bluedevils could long withstand such gentle jesting!

# Chapter XXIX
# Songs of the Present
# 1853-1855

As I turn, in due order of time, to the mention of *Songs of the Present*, there comes over me something of the joyous holiday feeling with which my mother, Archer, and I started in the summer of 1853 for North Wales, there to ~~spend on a tour~~ ramble about during four pleasant weeks. ~~Touring on a tour~~ Archer had quite recently published *Spring*. The poems of his youth were so to speak off his mind; and now there ~~loomed~~ pressed upon him his Soho experiences, filling heart and brain and claiming ~~utterance~~ utterance in verse. Fancy and ~~affection~~ feeling had divided *Spring* between them. The new volume was to consist mainly of life's realities. There was this resemblance between the Welsh tour in 1853 and the earlier tour in the English Lake District in 1846 (see Ch. XXII), that a poet made from both. But there was a difference too. In the Lake District the poet had been inspired by lake and mountain, brook and waterfall, by local legend, by great men living and dead ~~appertaining to~~ connected with the District. In Wales, though the beauty of the scenery may have aided inspiration, the poet ~~brought~~ carried with him his inspiration's source. In the English Lake District he may be said to have worked from without; in Wales he worked from within. ~~For~~ Those four short weeks ~~saw the creation~~ began and ended the shower of ~~the volume~~ song, except that a few poems, single drops ~~of dew~~ as it were, were suggested later. The songs were written with the usual rush, but ~~their foundations were laid deep in memory~~ they were the fruits of much observation and thought. There they were, and only needed to be poured forth. I was present at the birth of nearly every one of them, and ~~welcomed them with delight~~ gave them a sympathetic welcome. There was ~~no possibility~~ little chance of an alteration in a single line, - unless it were later - for no sooner was one poem written than the next instantly claimed

attention. Not fancy, I repeat, but reality pervaded the greater number, though no doubt a place was reserved for fancy too. Could poetry be made of these Cockney materials? I believe so, and hope to lead my readers to share in that belief. - I recollect Matthew Arnold's gentle wonder and amazement at the choice of such a subject by a poet, and his genial admission that for him the range of poetical subjects was thereby ~~enlarged~~ widened. Earnestness is the mark of the volume, sympathy with the people, the strong desire to rouse them from lethargy and sin, and to deepen their wealthier brethren's interest in their wrongs.

At the time when *Songs of the Present* were written I suppose that they stood alone, with nothing resembling them in the range of literature. Since then at least one remarkable volume of verse has appeared, having the same or kindred ends, *Poor Folks' Lives: Ballads and Stories in Verse* by Fredk. Langbridge. I only know this volume from a critique in the *Spectator* of Novr. 19, 1887. The ballads there quoted ~~therein~~ are ~~very~~ touching and charming. The critic ~~was plea~~ blamed the adoption by Mr Langbridge of the <u>very</u> language of the cockney-slang included, - poor which by some may be thought to heighten the effect of his verse. The critic wrote 'We must remember that though cockneys seldom talk good English, they never talk verse, and that they <u>understand</u> good English quite well enough to prefer to have their mistakes corrected where the deeper and truer side of their nature is to be represented.' However this may be, and I incline to think that every poet is the best judge of the particular line to be adopted, my brother has written in 'good English.' Very likely he could not have managed the Cockney vernacular with the perfection of Mr Langbridge.

*Songs of the Present* are in three divisions, 'Warning Voices', 'Voices of Hope', 'Voices of Cheer.' The deep gloom of the foreground is succeeded by ever increasing brightness. I purpose giving brief specimens of each division in turn.

Take a verse from

*Prelude*

Tis the poor man's joys and sorrows
Which have mainly fired the song;
Accents harsh at times it borrows
From keen memories of wrong.

You will take my honest meaning -
Here I scarcely judged amiss -
You will call me right in weening
That the Present's theme was this.

Early in the volume comes *Cry of the People*

I can but quote a verse or two, conveying the general tone

What avail the truths you proffer,
If we feel us steep'd in sin
Misery is a bitter scoffer,
And she sits our hearts within.
How from worst contamination
Shall we shield the babes we love,
While each breath breathes desolation,
And the sky seems iron above?

'Aid us! ope your sacred houses!
Seek our doors, speak words of cheer!
Till man's self from slumber rouses,

All your toil is fruitless here,
In ourselves the inspiration
Round from heart to heart must spread,
That shall wake a new creation,
That shall fire the living dead!'

Suicide from want, death from want, seduction, and drunkenness, find a place, as how should they not? Take the first four lines of *The Drunkard's Ditty*.

Sweep we along! Hell's jaws ope wide:
O for a draught of her fiery tide!
Old tottering beldames, and children, and all,
Devil's have lured us - we come to their call.

A *Grave Word* is what it calls itself. Take two verses:

Of all the mariners, life's billows cleaving,
Whose barks go down before they reach the goal,
None worthier seems of grief, though vain be grieving,
Than labour's toilworn son with brave proud soul.

x x

And shall the old aristocrat of labour,
The Artisan, in Union hide his head?
'No, no, he'll starve before he begs!' Some neighbour
Looks in, some morn, and finds the old man dead.

Thus opens ~~the~~ *Voice of the Malcontents*.

Loudly, friend, you chant your lays
As your soul were in each tone;
But in vain we upward gaze
Where convention rests alone.
Nobles should have earnest will,
Priests be dower'd with heart and brain;
But they toy and trifle still,
And to cry for help in vain.

Good is *The Lay-Sermon*, but too long for quotation! Here is a simple little poem for which great was and is the need.

*'Robert Dear'*

If you love me, Robert dear,
As you say you love me true,
Come not when no eye is near,
Linger not as now you do.
Do not whisper words so soft
In that low and thrilling tone;
Do not seek to kiss so oft
Though we seem to be alone.

God is near us, Robert dear;
Well He knows my heart is won:
'Tis my love that makes me fear,
What you do is not well done!
There's a serpent 'neath the flower;
Human hearts with ill are rife;
And the maid can yield no dower
That she robs not from the wife.

Therefore, Robert, let us love,
But rare secret converse seek.
Lest forgetting Him above
We should both prove worse than weak!
If you love me, Robert dear,
As you say you love me true,
Never let me shrink in fear
From my hope, my joy, from you!

There is *Plain Speaking* for rough brutes; there is *A Word for the Clergy*; there are encouragements to self respect and exhortations to moral courage. But I pass on for want of space to a grand poem, the last of Warning Voices, entitled *The Fair Ward*, expressive of the ineffectual cravings of our young Mechanic, dowered with genius but who has degraded God's high gifts, is dying, and his wasted life passes ~~is rapidly reviewed~~ in rapid review before him as he lies fever [ ]. I can but give the conclusion where all is beautiful.

His the breeze that wakes and murmurs seems the same that stirred the leaves
In the long-forgotten twilight round about our cottage eaves -
And the nightingale is calling from the bosom of the wood;
Then, as now, I heard her accents, but never understood.

'Rest,' she sang, 'within thy loved ones' circle, bear and conquer fate!'
Nightingale, thou call'st me vainly - I conceive thee all too late.
I have left Spring's flowers to wither, I have scorn'd Right's path to tread,
I have blasted those who prized me, and a God is overhead.

'Tis not that a mad ambition made my genial spirit bound:

I might sing beside the furrow, and Heaven's sunshine pure had crown'd,

Were it needful that the giddy world should profit by the lay,
It had stoop'd, mayhap, to listen from its cities far away.

Or if fate no answering praises for the minstrel lyre decreed,
Song will breathe its own enchantment, song shall wreathe its own fresh meed.

T'was a man, a base desire, that, half unconscious, stirred the flame
Of that reckless fever passion which my spirit's shroud became.

Hark, the nightingale's complaining seems to flood the dreary gloom,
'Wherefore, wherefore, hast thou left us? scorned love's blossoms in their bloom?

We have called thee, all who loved thee, from thy desolatory track;
We have broke our hearts in calling, and thou never would'st look back!'

x x x x x x

Ha! What stranger tenderer accents, pitying, seem to thrill the soul?
Ha! What melodies of wonder round my fainting spirit roll?

Charles? I dream! And thou, too, Ellen? Have ye come, despite my past?
Can one moment of contrition ope the golden gates at last?

Higher still the chants are pealing newborn spirit-pinions soar;

Ha! those Eyes, Divine and Human! Christ, Redeemer! I adore!

———

In the pleasing *Prelude* to ‘Voices of Hope’ occurs this verse:

Of love, you’ll think, too much I sang;
And yet in crowded town,
On rural heath, this burden rang,
‘Love only life can crown.’
In every rank - but must where care,
Where poverty oppresses -
Love lights the gloom with sunshine rare
And weariest spirits blesses.

Take ~~these verses from, passing from town to country~~ this brief episode, which has for subject - the reforming power of love from *The Squire’s Tale:*

‘She’s but a poor man’s daughter, sir,
But yet her wealth is rare;
The gold-mines o’er the water, sir,
Won’t match with her gold hair.
The sapphire and the topaz stone
Can’t rival her true eyes;
And her pure heart – that’s mine alone -
Could all the world outprize?

I’ve seen her spread the linen white
Before her father’s door,
When, like a living flash of light
She danced the meadow o’er.
I’ve longed to be the green, green grass

O’er which her footsteps tread;
You’ll think it strange such thoughts should pass
Through any poor man’s head.

But love has mightiest magic, sir,
The meanest soul to raise,
And sure, all things that look on her
Must long to love and praise.
But her good father thinks me nought;
I was a fool, ‘tis true,
And rest one still in her grave thought -
I know not what to do.

For, as for sweet Elizbeth,
She’ll give me look nor word,
Although her silence cost my death,
Until her father’s heard –
Until he’s heard my suit, and blessed:
Oh, sir, my heart she fills;
No hope for me of peace or rest,
While flow the summer rills.

For all the rills go singing, sir,
Of her and her dear looks;
The echoes wide are ringing, sir,
From heights and vall’d nooks.
She fills my heart, she fills my brain,
She fires my every breath!
Oh, can such love as mine be vain,
My own Elizabeth?’

Delightful are *Town Lyrics*, but I may only quote a verse here and there. Take the first and last verses of

*Mary (Song)*

D'ye know why Mary dresses
Less smartly than the rest?
They strut so fine, some folks opine
They're peacocks all at best,
With long bright streamers flaunting,
And cuffs and collars gay,
A body's courage daunting
With such a grand array!

x x x
x x x

And there's one other reason
Why Mary don't dress fine;
Fine clothes may move some hearts to love,
But neatness more takes mine.
When I think of that mantle faded
And the true warm heart beneath,
I should count me a wretch degraded
If I loved not for life and death.

*A Sunday Afternoon*, a *Garret in Bloomsbury*, a *Confession*, are each more pleasing the one than ~~another~~ the other. I must quote ~~a verse or two~~ the conclusion from *A Working Man's Story*. It should be premised that the poor of Soho were ~~apt~~ given to ~~congregate~~ dwell as large families, in one room, whence only trouble could arise:

I got the hint from our old pastor
And thought one trial I'd to it give:
'No man is of himself the master,'
Quoth he, 'till he has room to live.'
I stop three shillings from my wages,
That else had bought the beer-shop's till,
My wife a second room engages:
The spell was wrought, think what you will!

Not all at once, you'll understand,
But by degrees worked all things straight;
Disorder lost the upper hand,
And I came home no longer late.
My Wife took pride to keep things clean,
In bed, and board, and children's dresses;
They too, go tattered late, and mean,
They felt that order cheers and blesses.

And self-respect bland influence spread;
To school they now went, gladly, proudly;
And prayers each night were duly said,
Where angry voices once screamed loudly.
In fact, I won't exaggerate;
Truth's truth - receive, or don't receive it;
I would not change my rank and state
Not with Prince Albert's now, believe it!

For I've the joy of seeing all
I cherish wax and thrive around me,
Through my arm's toil; that's what I call

Rare comfort: Providence has crowned me.
And, frown or jeer, this joy I owe it
To two rooms - soon they shall be three.
In a truth-totter, and no poet,
Brothers, wake up, and do like me!

Such homely materials might even surprise a classical poet, a Matthew Arnold! I must find room ~~must for something more poetical and that is forthcoming, let me quote the first two verses of~~ for a favourite of my own.

*London Ballad*

She dwells beside the water
With whom I'd pass my life;
And sure, so sweet a daughter
Must make a darling wife -
Her hair lies smoothly braided,
Her lips rich music speak,
And all spring's flowers had faded
If matched with her soft cheek.

Where father Thames flows gaily,
Beside the bridge's pier,
I watch to meet her daily,
Though many an eye be near -
There may be little in it,
Just to take her hand, and part;
But I would not yield that minute
For the treasures of the mast.

add two remaining verses!

*AWG*.

~~The rest is equally charming~~.
*Rural Rhymes* are delightful one and all. Take the 1st verse of

*Susan:*

When dewdrops yet are pearly
On every leaf and flow'r,
She's up and moving early,
And that's a golden hour.
For ere I drive my plough afield
In this bright August weather,
The dappled cows their milk must yield,
And then we meet together.
Ah, happy morning,
When I and Susan meet!
The very cows upon the mead,
I know they love my sweet.

Very sweet is *The First Parting* between a mother and her daughter who is going ~~for the final time~~ to service.

The coach is coming, Mary dear,
But can't be nigh, I know,
The hill's so steep - come near, more near!
'Tis hard to let you go.
'Tis very hard to part, my child;
But God's good will be done:
Don't cry, child! smile, you always smiled
More blithely than the sun.

Altogether charming, though I can only give the first four lines, is

*Rural Courtship*

~~beginning~~

We were reaping in the corn;
How it came I can't remember,
'Twas a golden autumn morn,
In that ripe month of September.

~~I can only give the first four lines~~.

Then the *Convict's Tale* has high merit; it is long, and should be read as a whole.
I pass on rapidly to 'Voices of Cheer.' Here is the 1st verse of the

*Introduction*

Now a weighty apprehension
Seems my heart-strings to benumb;
Till this work had fixed dimension
Still I hoped great things to come.
For the theme seem'd so inspiring,
And the people's cause so great,
Hopes my soul were fondly poring,
I might help to vanquish Fate.

I ~~cannot allude to a hundreth part of what~~ must leave much unalluded to that is interesting here. Very pleasing are *A Widow's Garret*, *The Mother's*

*Soliloquy* and the *Mother's Last Words*. Indeed there is a sacred pathos about these three poems.

Let me quote the concluding verses of *A Widow's Garret*, premising this the widow has been speaking affectionately of her lost sailor son:

'Twas a long doubt; we never heard
Exactly, how the ship went down;
But I can't say another word
Just now - I think he won the crown -
He was a good boy.' Ceased awhile
That aged widow's quivering voice;
She smiled through tears a trustful smile
That made my secret heart rejoice.

Poor was her chamber, low, and small,
Yet a clean garret, next the sky;
On life's last verge, her God her all,
Content to live, prepared to die.
And on the seaking table lay
Her much-worn Bible, friend in need; vague
This is no subject for a lay -
The life of life was hers indeed!

Almost I blush these words to trace -
This calmly-burning taper bright,
This happy pensioner of Grace,
To draw from forth her sacred night.
Some stars are destined here to shine,
And some their beams will scarce display,
Until descends the Judge Divine,

To wreathe them round His throne for aye.

And I am tempted to add if it be only a few lines from

*The Mother's Soliloquy*

So there, my pretty ones, you lie,
All fast asleep, with angels nigh:
The parson said so, Sunday night
And that my heart well knows was right.

x x x x x

Out in the street, my John, my son,
Away from merriest friend will run
If curse or wicked word be spoke
Although they cry 'twas all a joke.
And you, my meek and pretty Jane,
When you go trilling your blithe strain,
The boldest give you room to pass,
The roughest whisper, 'Bless the lass!'
And little Robert - talk of him,
I scarce know why my eyes grow dim -
He minds me of my sister's child
Who died so young, and dying smiled;

I always fear he can't live long
When, he begins that infant song,
How 'up in heav'n good Jesus reigns
Where happy angels swell their strains:
He woke last night 'twas midnight past -

‘Mother,’, he said, ‘I can’t sleep fast;
Just let me sing that one song through
What ‘up in Heav’n the angels do;
I’ll sing so low that none shall wake -’
Would heav’n my own sweet darling take?
&c. &c.

Bright and merry - though scarcely humorous are *Edward Blewett* and *Farmer Gray’s Flower-sermon*. But I have quoted too much already, and will only briefly notice, in conclusion,

*The Death-Light.*

A dying husband, a mechanic, is talking to his wife, and in the bitterness of his soul recalls all their past troubles, cruel want, loss of children, and those children’s dying words.

Helpless, ones! - I hear the scents murmurs of their fever’d accents flow:
‘I am happy - father, mother, kiss me - Jesus calls - I go.’
Childish unsubstantial raptures! should we bless your spells, or ban
Fairy dreamers that cradled childhood! Misery works the soul of man.
No! a God of love, who lets His creatures, wormlike, weltering, graveward round,
Spectral obsolete delusion! Iron Fate is lord of All.

x x x x x x

Mary, true wife, bend to listen - do not think my brain’s wild -
O, unspeakable compassion! Radiant beauty undefiled!

Upward, through the sombre ether floated I, by soul-wings borne;
But the midnight clothes me, pall-like, helpless, desolate, forlorn.

And my spirit, that through being's portals fixedly had forced its way,
Seem'd, in absolute negation, slowly weltering away.

Suddenly, a speech of glory in the farthest east desired,
Waxed in strange and crescent splendours, pour'd irrediations wide.

Glittering, deepening, soul-bewildering, till the golden portal through,
Burst the seven wide heavens of wonder on my fascinated view.

But, through all, one central orbit seem'd with speechless might to glow
'Twas a Face - whose Face I speak not - sphere of mingling bliss and woe.

Pity infinite remorseful, for a world of sin, worry, pain,
'Neath a deeper consciousness, that spake of Love's enduring reign,

Mourning over countless mourners who had ween'd He could forsake;
Ah! without the closing vision, the Almighty heart might break!

And those wondrous eyes were fixed upon me, scattering shrouds of gloom, -
Calming, soothing, rapture wakening, sealing my immortal doom.

Breathing, 'Not an atom circles, undescried, unweighed by Me;
Shade must mark the hours of time, but shadeless rests eternity:'

Teaching, 'On thy loved lost blossoms from my heaven of heavens I

smiled;’
Tenderly heart-blindness chiding, ‘Couldst thou doubt me, O my child!’

Baring the Almighty Mystery, still afar, and dimly scanned,
‘Harm the way, and dark the portal to the glowing spirit-land:’

Veiling strange grave, mystic lights, behind existence’ sable pall
‘Woe, and Death, and Hell, are mighty; Love is last, and over all.’

- And I leave ye void of doubt. I know His boundless arm, unseen,
Is around our hut, my Mary - is, and evermore has been.

For our little ones His faithful heart shall life or death provide;
He is near us; we may trust Him, for He lives, and He has died.

And the path of desolation, which those mighty footsteps trod, Lead, o’er fathomless abysses, to the thunder-throne of God!

———

~~It~~ Possibly a few of the Songs might ~~have been~~ be spared with advantage, but it is hard to say. Many excellencies that I have not signalised are contained in the volume , - ~~a volume alike the outcome of heart and brain~~ though humour be generally speaking absent. *Songs of the Present* went ~~rapidly~~ through three editions and has long been out of print. ~~Bishop~~ Dr Ewing, Bp. of Argyle and the Isles, was delighted with ~~his volume~~ the book, and I, the author’s brother, am proud of it. The ~~Songs~~ first edition were published ~~first~~ early in June 1854.

# Chapter XXX
# Home Correspondence
# 1855

Here I shall be relieved for a while from the need for narrative, and my readers will thereby be gainers, for this chapter is to be devoted - with one or two exceptions - to Archer Gurney's correspondence with his mother and brother. Writing to these nearest friends he expressed his thoughts unreservedly. Utterly unguarded as is what follows, it is only, I take it, likely to be the more interesting on that account. Of course I cannot print here all the home letters of the year 1855 - but only enough to serve for specimens, enough to inform us what the mind of him who wrote them was in part engaged upon.

*To his brother*
26 March 1855, Buckingham

*Thackeray.*

'Your raptures about Esmond I can scarcely sympathise with: it is charming in parts, I confess, but dull I think in others; and I don't like the moral bearing. The heroine may be natural; but some things should not be told. The tendency is to make men laugh at female virtue and religion; and all the praises of Lady Castletown (is she so called?) as a saint, render this apparent intention the more marked. His works are those of a man who has no faith, no convictions of any kind, no real earnestness: they expose cant, and pretence and unreality, but give nothing better in their stead. The author has no faith in God or man - Warrington is his ideal. He confounds the needful distinction between good and evil: if he teaches universal charity, it is a charity mixed with

a large dose of contempt. He has ‘bonhomie’ unquestionably, real kindness of heart even, has good intentions perhaps, in the main, as far as he has any, and is a wonderfully keen observer of men and manners. He is a kind of Prose Tennyson in his religious bearings: he sees the aesthetic beauty of Christianity and no more. Of course Dickens is a child to him; yet Thackeray’s is not a great mind. Yet I enjoy his lively humour, his scorn of meanness, his charming pathos, - even his comprehensive liberality. I should like to do him justice, dwelling (as is my wont you know), rather on his merits than defects.

*To the same.*
*Personal amity. Essay on ‘The Catholic Church.’*
Buckingham. Easter Tuesday 1855

Now a word to thank you for your objurgatory epistle. It is so hard to draw the line between vanity and pride that I really know not whether I am innocent or guilty of what you lay to my charge. I am certainly always very willing to admire others and if I like recognition, so very long denied me, is this blamable? Perhaps it may be. You must make some allowance for a man’s idiosyncracy, and not want to stretch everybody on the same last; For the *Essay*, are you not criticising a little in the dark? You must not take too literally all I may write in an hour of despondency. Of one thing I am sure: to succeed in these days one must never forget the ‘suaviter in modo’ however one pursues the ‘fortiter in re.’ Would I had always remembered this in my reviews. There is novelty and audacity of conception in my *Essay*; all I want is that it should not shock at first sight, not cause my book and me to be tabooed. I am not fond of beating about the bush - what I mean, I say: but it is time to give up this practice. You can’t combine opposites. You can’t have thorough frankness, and exceeding polish at the same time. But I repeat it is surely idle to criticise in the dark. Wait at all events till

you have read the Essay.

*To his mother. Self-Introspection.*
Easter Tuesday 10 April / 55
Buckingham

‘Augustus has written a long letter finding fault with me, of all things in the world, for being too cautious, too anxious not to offend anybody, especially in the *Essay*; and yet twitting me with vanity, too. Am I vain? I hope not, I do believe myself a true poet, and a fine reader, and a striking preacher, and an original thinker, and a very second rate sort of man! But I can’t help it. These are my convictions. I know that I lack elegance and refinement of style, that I am irritable, partly from long delayed success, from bitter disappointments oft repeated; that I feel vexed when I am not acknowledged; when far smaller men, as it seems to me, pass by me on the road to fame. And I am not really religious and loving enough to bear all this as the Cross my Master lays upon my shoulders; though no doubt it is so. Either I am altogether wrong, and I am not a genuine poet or in any sense a man of genius; or my lack of success is extraordinary, and must be Divinely ordered, as a corrective discipline, which proves that I have still a Father in heaven. God will not give me up to selfishness and folly, and I am not worthy of success. Meanwhile it is rather hard to be accused of vanity. Augustus, I believe, is most anxious for my success; nay thinks far more about it than I do myself; and at last, tired of quarrelling with the world, he thinks it must be my fault too, and so he vents his loving disappointment on Pilgarlie. I don’t think anybody would think me vain, had I succeeded.’

———

*Sermons. Currer Bell &c.*
*To his brother.*

April 1855. Buckingham

'I could make up 4 or 5 vols of sermons thus: One on 'The Ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ:' this would include many best worth preserving, 'Peter on the Waters', 'Zacchaeus', 'The Marriage of Cana', 'Lazarus', 'Cleansing of the Temple', 'Transfiguration', 'Nativity', 'Boyhood', 'Passion of our Lord', and many more: a Second Volume on 'Old Testament History', - this would include 'The Creation', 'The Fall', 'The world before the Flood', 'Deluge', 'The sacrifice of Isaac', 'Joshua staying the Sun and Moon', 'Ruth', 'Samuel in the Tabernacle', 'David', 'The captive Maiden', 'Solomon in his old age', 'Hezekiah', &c. &c.: a Third on 'The Christian Seasons', not for every Sunday regularly, but one or two Advent Sermons, one or two for Christmas, one or two for Epiphany &c. closing with Trinity: a Fourth on 'Practical Christianity and Apostolical Teaching' mixed: and a Fifth on Subjects of the day.
P.S.
Poor Currer Bell! No more 'Villettes' and 'Jane Eyres', which is grievous to think of. Her books were real though stern, and had a peculiar charm about them. Yet it is well perhaps she has not frittered away her reputation in trash, like so many. - Such an admirable article on Thackeray in last Saturday's *Daily News* - really surprising - not by one of the craft at all but obviously by a gentleman taking his ease, some clever barrister most probably enjoying his vacation. It does Thackeray ampler justice than I could do, at least in a happier vein; and it has pleased me exceedingly.'

———

On April 16th, 1855, I received a letter from Archer with two enclosures about *Iphegenia* - one from the Messrs Longman, declining to publish *Iphigenia* at their own risk, but offering, with some civility, to publish the

work on commission, i.e. at the author's cost. The second enclosure was from their 'Reader.'

*Opinion on 'Iphigenia' by the Reader of the Messrs Longman.*

'Perhaps no higher testimony can be borne by me to the merit of this work than the simple statement that I have read it through three times, and that it improved upon me at each successive reading. Viewed positively, I regard it as a noble conception nobly carried out: its structure, like the story, quite antique, its characters rigorously delineated, its positions true to nature, and its conclusion satisfactory. Viewed comparatively, that is with reference to the great works of Euripides and Goethe, I am disposed to rank it very high; and I question much whether even Goethe would have treated this phase of Iphigenia's story, had he attempted it as at one time he intended, more satisfactorily to the judgement and the feeling. Any defects that I have noticed are purely verbal, and it would be hypercritical to point them out.'
*The Reader to the Messrs Longman.*

To his ~~mo~~brother

'I daresay there was truth in your late strictures, and I shall be able and willing to bear them, I trust and believe if God is pleased to vouchsafe me a success at last. Dare we hope it? Ah, I have been long and sorely tutored into owning that 'the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong.' Could I get proud beneath the sunshine of prosperity? That would be despicable. But don't let us hope too much. This 'reader' may be an oddity: nobody on the Press may agree with him. Let us be prepared for that at least. My dear mother may be opposed to publication: and if she be, I cannot blame her.'

———

*To his mother*
Buckingham 14 April 1855

*Iphigenia*
*(after quoting reader's opinion.)*

Of course higher praise than this could scarcely be bestowed, and the receipt of it has affected me considerably. It is so rare for me to win even a passing gleam of sunshine. I can only thank God for this. I shall not write many such works as *Iphigenia*: perhaps not any. - Though instead of devoting years to it, as Goethe would have done, it was first composed by me in three days; yet it has been corrected and revised with great care, and several most valuable suggestions I owe to Augustus. I cannot tell you how my heart seems to expand under the influence of this little glimmer of success, after such a long series of cruel failures and disappointments. Will Providence befriend me at last? I can scarcely believe it. Many thanks for your long and sensible letter. God grant that I may be worthy of success, if He should be pleased to grant it me at last, and cast off vanity and selfishness for ever!'

———

*A few days later he wrote to his mother*.

'Thanks, my dearest mother, for your very kind note I have no great expectations from *Iphegenia*: my disappointments have been too many and too grievous; and even if successful at last, the bloom will have been taken from the flower.'

*Essay on the Church Catholic. Majorian.*
To his brother.

3rd May, 1855, Buckingham.

‘Congratulate me. I have just completed the *Essay on the Church Catholic* (whereby a great weight is taken off my mind,) and as I trust successfully; the two last essays on ‘The English Church’, and the ‘Alternate Reunion of the Churches’ being, as I imagine, the most useful and the best. It is a very awful undertaking to write such a work. May the Head of the Church accept and bless it. (To this hour it remains unpublished). I believe it is sound in the main, though it has much that is novel in it, at least in combination and collocation. I have striven to avoid giving needless offence to any. I may conciliate none, and gain none. That is in God’s hands. I have spoken what I believed to be His truth. I discern great dificiencies, but I believe real merit also. O that God would make one more worthy of the truths one affirms. The world, the religious world in particular, may cry out against a play-wright theologian. Then *Majorian* would come in well by way of clincher and defence. It would serve such a purpose thoroughly. Otherwise it is too painful, I must admit, to pertain to the category of pure art, - to be often reperused with pleasure: it professes to embody a corrupt and degenerate Age, and on that very account must be a painful object of contemplation. My next great work must be more healthful, and more cheering, if God gives me grace to write one. I do not know of any noble theme as yet. There is so much more that is painful than is really admirable in History, that one is driven to invent. - The *Essay* could scarcely be published till *Iphigenia* has faced the world. My theological work seems to have thrown the purely literary into the background for myself. It is indeed the higher of the two, As I went on with the *Essay* you will find that my tone grew bolder and distincter.’

———

*To his brother.*

Buckingham 18 May 1855

*Songs of Early Summer. Oxford Essays. The Newcomers* &c.

'I am correcting my *Songs of Early Summer*. There is much that I believe to be really beautiful in them: yet the effect of the whole collection is depressing; wherein it differs, I imagine, from *Songs of the Present*, to which, (the second and third divisions of it particularly) I always return with fresh pleasure , - and even from *Spring*, which though lacking in substance and reality perhaps, is surely a charming volume, take it for all in all, - and from *Lake Lays and Lyrics*, which though very unpretending, will be healthful and sweet, with a rural freshness and fragrance that marks their origin still clinging to them. You and I may delight in these Lake Lyrics, but the world cannot till it has been taught to recognise and love a natural style. We were all wrong about simplicity charming the age. Tennyson's simplicity may, because that is not the real thing, but very refined imitation, fraught with quaintness and darling mannerisms of all complexions. Of all that I have yet written in the way of lyrics I conceive *Songs of the Present* to stand highest, because they combine truth, healthful and needful truth, with beauty, and vindicate the holiness - If I may so speak without bombast - of common life. Now *Songs of Early Summer* lack a purpose and a moral. The general effect of the volume is unsatisfactory, incomplete: it is the overture without the opera; the prelude at least without the song. What are lacking are 'Midsummer Melodies' to complete the picture of a poet's life. And these I very possibly may never write. For a midsummer may not be granted to me.

I have the *Oxford Essays*, and have read three of them. The first on Lucretius I like much; it is choicely elegantly written, and the discarding of the Anonymous has brought with it a show of modesty,

which is refreshing. There is no attempt on the part of the critic to set himself up above the greatest men, and this is as it should be. He admires Tennyson enthusiastically; so he ought to admire, for Tennyson is great in his way, very great; and though I, a natural poet, suffer grievously from his exclusive literary 'vogue', this will not justify injustice. It is pleasing that a living poet should receive his dues. An affectation of superiority to Tennyson on the part of Mr Sellar would have been intolerable. When he says that a certain fragment of Catullus 'brings to the mind the calm finished simplicity and mellow cadences of the Morte d'Arthur and the beautiful idylls of our own great living poet', he gives me no little pleasure. For an age that has no faith, save in beauty, (and by age I mean here the literary world exclusively) Tennyson must have an indescribable charm. His lack of genuine lyric impulse, his factitious loveliness, his grand indifferentism, are of a piece, and must fascinate all who surrender themselves to the influence of the spell.

'Can I hope to awaken soul? to breathe a loving faith into men's minds? to supply the best of contradictions to Froud's assertion, in his very clever and rather wicked essay, that there is no such thing as faith left, save faith in Progress, - which he himself derides, while he confesses it to be his sheet anchor. He tells us, no History can be written now, because no man knows on what principle to write, or at least opinions are so fatally divided that no one is justified in saying, 'This is Truth.' In fact it is just the notion against which my '*Testimony*' in 'Voices of Cheer' is directed, that may be said to be the ideé mére of this paper. Froude suggests, too, that we are drifting to the overthrow of Christianity and when that is accomplished, then dawns his Millennium, in which 'then' I would write an emphatic Never. As for the notion about the place of the Statute Books it seems ridiculous at first sight, but perhaps may be worth consideration. I too believe the

time is scarcely come for the writing of the History.

Finally, as to Oxford Essays, I have waded with difficulty through the verbose paper perpetrated anent Alfred de Musset by Palgrave of Exeter. De Musset the greatest of French poets? that the writer, counting on the general ignorance of French, should dare to twitter this! And what a style! Every sentence is as hard as a bullet of digestion: never were participles employed in such an unprincipled and barbaric fashion. There is scarcely a phrase of decent English from first to last. Then, that this infantine imitator of Tennyson should be so fierce against all imitations is wondrous. Twice or thrice he returns to the charge: 'Imitation, that weakness of all weaknesses the most fatal' as he says in his own brilliant language! Then the weak debauched conceptions of an empty heart and emptier brain, one after one, which he enumerates, as triumphs of art -, French of the French, the affectation of passion, a drawing-room sonneteer aping the Corsair: - even the best lines quoted on a lover returning to the scene of happier days is a faint reflection of a similar poem in Victor Hugo, which, as you may remember, I have translated, and which has far more vividness reality and beauty. The other extracts are all more or less disagreeable, and this the best is 'fade.' Then the characteristic way in which this writer, affirming that extravagance generally precede loveliness, couples *Udolpho* (the Mysteries) and *Kehama*, - as appearing contemporaneously with the *Lyrical Ballads* (Wordsworth's) and *The Eve of St Agnes*. Of course Palgrave cannot get beyond this. The higher beauties of this even many probably be lost in him; but the luscious softness, the little delicacies, the candied richness, the brocaded gold and emeralds, he can appreciate, and he presumes - this dwarf - to speak of *Kehama*, with its magnificent unity its grandeur purity and exquisite moral beauty of conception, as a on a par with *Udolpho*! - But why waste anger? Then, Shakespeare to have personified himself with

that twaddle Hamlet! This is the oracular utterance of the age again. One can bear it better from the single Ninny however than the mystic We. Here is a charming specimen by the bye of this master's prose : 'Alfred de Musset, like the poet of the Commedia, or that other, who, if at all, has personified himself in Hamlet (from this point of view we may not unjustly name him with Dante and with Shakespeare) has suffered almost more than he has loved, and we &c.' How clear sparkling, and masterly! And I think this may be considered a favorable specimen.

'Talking of style, I have read again that number of the *Newcomers* which contains the charming dramatic conversations. How wonderful it is from first to last! I know of nothing sweeter, in the whole range of poetry and fiction, than Madame de Florac, - certainly nothing in French romance to be compared with it: it is the ideal aspect of French woman-hood and Roman piety, and yet it is true.

A certain intellectual, not weakness, but 'Borniertheit', as the Germans might say, adds another charm. Paul de Florac is wonderful. His English French delights me more than I can express. The account of his little skirmish with Lord Farintosh is masterly indeed. 'I attended myself to a soufflet' replied Florac - do you remember? Well, then, the two or three scenes of the little comedy, how perfect are they - how different from the fadaises of Alfred de Musset! Ethel and Clive too are admirably supported throughout. Every word is in character, and almost every word is delightful. There even the little scene betwixt the servants at the door, which intervenes, how first rate! - 'Good morning, Thomas. How dy'do, old Backystopper?' – 'How de do, Jim, I say, you couldn't give a feller a drink of beer could yer, Muncontour?.' But to quote here were profanation. All is admirable, - and dear Madame de Florac sweetest of all.

’Well, lastly, I will mention *Anderson’s Fairy Legends*. Do you know the charming volume with 45 tales in it, beginning with ‘The Wild Swans’? It is really charming. ‘The Wild Swans’, the opening legend, has fascinated me. Sweeter poetry of its kind it were impossible to conceive. What an exquisite touch when the heroine, the loveliest and the most innocent of Princesses, is working on the night before her threatened execution to save her brothers’ lives: ‘Little mice ran busily about and dragged the nettles to her feet, willing to help her; and the thrush perched on the iron bars of the window, and sang all night as merrily as he could, that Elise might not lose courage.’
Now good night. Ever your affectionate brother
What a scrawl!
Archer.

P.S. No doubt the dignity of Pylades might be better preserved: as it is he even exhibits a certain weakness. I wish him to do so. Pylades is not Iphigenia, and despite her praises does not rise to the same height of moral elevation. I don’t think we should like him as well if he did. They can’t be all rivalising with one another, the characters, as a Frenchman would make them, to see which can be most sublime.

———

To his brother
*Everlasting Punishment.*
June 10 / 55 Buckingham

‘I don’t think I can seriously modify the 5th essay. I think Luther was an incarnation of heresy and pride and vicious Protestantism, and loathe his name and memory - and thus thinking I cannot honestly write less than I have done. To be sure, I detest most of the Fathers too, and have

not said so.

Do you know it strikes me, more and more, that the evil leaven, at all times, in Christianity, perverting the noblest instincts, warring against art, science, civilisation, truth, honor, rectitude and love, has been the doctrine of everlasting punishment: the puzzle is, why, doing so much mischief, and being false, it was ever apparently set forth in Holy Writ. The world, I conceive, required stern teaching, - I can see that; nothing less, I suppose, would have moved the torpid Jew, or sensual Heathen. At least, I imagine so. Yet why should not the love of the Eternal Son of God have sufficed? How much better we should all love God, were this accursed cloud away! It is, rely on it, the root of all evil in the Church. If it were true, the Ascetic view would be the right one, - and we should be wrong from first to last. There is no alternative. And it must come to speaking out some day, - but not yet, not yet. (I implored him to speak out at once. He did speak out a little later. AWG.) Let us be Incumbents first, for Incumbents are safe enough: I should destroy my own chance of serving my generation by speaking now; but it must come. It can't be true! What mean the many - what the few stripes - if it be true? What the Lord drawing all men unto Him? What all things being gathered together in Christ? What God being All in all? Where is there room for hell in such a world? No - a thousand times, No: it cannot be - it is not so: Scripture testifies again and again in plainest terms against it. But why did our Lord consciously deceive, it will be asked? There lies the difficulty. But can it be called deception? Is not future suffering, as Maurice says, eternal, in the sense of being absolute? The worm dies not while it gnaws; this implies not that it is to gnaw for ever. No time for more today. I know you feel with me about this. The more I have studied the matter the more intense my conviction has become.
Ever &c.
Archer.

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*To his brother.*
June 11th / 55 Buckingham
*Publication of Iphigenia. Andersen*

Now that *Iphigenia* is published, I am rather out of conceit with it myself. As for the critics, I fear there is no hope. They are too stolid, too utterly depraved, to recognise any real merit without fuss and splutter and parade.

Accept herewith Andersen's *Danish Fairy Legends* - 'The Wild Swans' is charming for its poetry. 'The Ugly Duckling' is exquisite indeed, as an apologue of genius and its trials. You will appreciate it, 'The Nightingale' is to my mind very charming. 'The Emperor's new Clothes' is glorious again, to show the folly of the world.
Archer.

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*To his brother.*
*Iphigenia.*
June 15 / 55 Buckingham

I went through *Iphigenia* for the first time in print last night. It is of course a very beautiful play, and poem; the weakest point is Pylades - and his 'amour'! Doubtless the play would have been more sternly classic without Pylades and his love-vows, but then Iphigenia would have interested us far less. The 1st Act I like from first to last. In the 2nd, I admire exceedingly the soliloquy of Pylades; also the scene between Orestes Iphigenia and Pylades: so I do the first love scene; parts of it, such as Pylades' narrative of the past and Iphigenia's eulogy

of friendship delight me. The rest of the Act is not remarkable. The 3rd Act opens with a really beautiful scene again, I also like Iphigenia's soliloquy very well; and then comes the very striking scene betwixt her and Myron. The rest of the 3rd Act is inferior, - not however bad! In the 4th Act the opening is good, down to Electra's discovery of the Priestess: the scene which follows betwixt Iphigenia and Pylades, though well treated enough, does not rise to the same level; but with the arrival of Orestes the poem revives: the close of the Act from

'I go, and may the Goddess shield' &c.

is first rate. And I think the same remark will apply to the 5th Act from first to last. - I should like to write a second Greek tragedy, if I could find a subject from which love should be wholly excluded: or at least in which the honors should be for the heroes, not the heroines.
In haste.
Archer.

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P.S. You are mistaken about *Majorian*. The ascetic view is stated powerfully. The Bishop says to Majorian in Epoch I:-

> What is this volatile life but one frail plank
> Athwart the vast fire-ocean grimly heaving?
> The ebbless ocean of eternity.
> Would'st sport upon the plank?

What would you more? But it is not in *Majorian*, that I can introduce my own view. That would prejudice the minds of the orthodox too much against its whole design. It is assumed as it were.'

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*To his brother.*
*Browning.*
19 June 19th / 55 Buckingham

It is only by comparison with the rest that the love scenes in *Iphigenia* suffer. Then there is always a grave objection to altering what has been published. Browning's cobblings displease me. By the bye, yesterday, I was looking over Browning. What a constant straining after effect! The effect is attained, but reason and reality are sacrificed. I think less highly of his plays than I did. Their beauties are incontestable, a certain happiness of phraseology, the right word at the right moment, a quickness and liveliness, keeping up the balls, a passionate dramatic power and pathos, - these are his qualities, - but what an absence of repose, of dignity, of truth: These remarks do not apply so much to *Paracelous* as to the shorter dramas, *Pippa Passes, Colombe's Birthday, The Blot on the Scutcheon, Luria,* &c. Morally too they are defective, and nothing can remove the faults: they are inwrought.
Archer.

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*To his mother.*
*Criticism in Spectator*
June 26 / 55 Buckingham

I was glad to get your encouraging praises of *Iphigenia* this morning, because the post brought me a dismal criticism in the *Spectator.* I thought it would be so, but cannot pretend to say I am not vexed. The writer is, I doubt not, a very fair specimen of the critics generally, and it will be well if others are as mild. He says 'Mr Archer Gurney exhibits a poetical mind, trained in a good school' and then goes on 'but he is far

from being equal to *Iphigenia at Delphi*. There are occasionally weighty lines, but the verse in general does not rise much above dramatic mediocrity, still less maintain the vivid grandeur necessary for such a theme.' - You see, the writer is like all the rest of them, incapable of really admiring anything but extravagance, and a constant straining after new effects. I cannot please them without writing vilely. Is not this very sad? He goes on 'There are some striking situations: as where Myron, a follower of Orestes, who has escaped from the slaughter, as he fancies, of his master and friend at Taurus, first encounters Iphigenia; or when Electra, on first meeting Iphigenia, feels instinctively drawn towards her; or when she again meets the priestess of Tauris, after she has learned Myron's suspicions. They are not, however, well developed dramatically, nor is the conduct of the whole tragedy learnedly(!) managed.' Think of the writer quietly [ ] that 'the situations are not well developed dramatically', and eating his supper doubtless with the better appetite. He makes a mistake too in describing the fable, which shows how carelessly he must have read the play. Thus he says that Orestes and Iphigenia have carried off the statue of the Goddess from Tauris, which of course any man acquainted with Euripides knows that they never did. He complains of a lack of sublimity - and describes the very thing which the tragedy does possess as the one thing lacking in it. I quote again, 'Gigantic Loftiness' (he means Alexander Smithism) predominate throughout - in thought, in sentiment, in manners, and in passion, combined with a certain statuesque severity, which yet must pass from stone into life. Without these qualifications, a writer might as well attempt another Divine Comedy or Paradise Lost as a Greek tragedy with any hope of success.' But enough and too much.
Archer'

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*To his mother.*
*Another criticism*
July 1 / 55 Buckingham

A notice of *Iphigenia*, some three quarters of a page, in Masters' larger Magazine, 'The Ecclesiastic', came to hand today. The writer begins by saying he does not complain of there not being many passages to quote, goes on to condemn the Alexander Smiths and say mine is the true thing, works himself into a state of enthusiasm about its grandeur, and winds up by saying it is 'a readable and pleasing poem.' And this is one of the best! It is wonderful, out of all whooping! O me. I give All up.
Archer.

*To his brother*
*July 25 / 55 Buckingham*

Blogg is delighted with *Iphigenia*. I will send you his letter some day. He talks again about crudenesses in *King Charles, Spring*, and more especially *Songs of the Present*. What he means I don't know. Every man has his style. He is taken with what he calls the 'poetry' of *Iphigenia*, like all Englishmen recognising poetry in fancy, not in sublimated feeling, energy or passion. Yet, as I shall ask him, is not *Deborah's Song* poetical without an image? All Greek and German poets are against us: Shakespeare has perverted our ideas in this respect. Of course fancy is very delightful, so is imagination, but these are not the only poetry. On this ground *King Charles* met no appreciation, even from those who devoured it with the strongest sympathy. Its poetry is that of feeling, energy, and truth, not fancy. *Iphigenia* has the latter added: hence I hoped it might succeed. Not so,- because it lacks the mannerism of the hour.
Archer

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*To his brother*
*Beginning of illness*
August 5 / 55 Buckingham

I am a little better, but write from bed. To tell you the whole truth I was apprehensive of typhus, but have been reassured. There had been one such case, and I visited. And then - the course of events plainly seemed to me to say, 'There is no room for you in the world. You have done your best. You have failed. The Age maybe vile. You are not the man to turn it. Probably no man is.' I assure you thinking over the matter calmly last night I was entirely reconciled to God's decree. On the other hand, God may have work for me. If He has, He will keep me - never fear. Indeed heroics are ridiculous on such an occasion.
Archer.'

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*To the same*
*The Newcomers*
August 6 / 55 Buckingham

Just a line to let you know I am progressing slowly. Headache still.
None the less for having just read and much wept over the final No. of *the Newcomers*. Wonderful, isn't it? Almost too painful. Not the going to the Pensioners. There would be nothing in this save for accursed Protestantism - which is always - I won't say what. But I mean the Campaigner is too dreadful. One hears the monster. One wants her to be annihilated, It's all true – doubtless - but dreadful. Florac and Ethel remain delightful, Madame de Florac is the heroine. Well, it's wonderful, and there's an end.

I have the fever, but nothing serious I trust.
Archer.

I may here inter~~vene~~pose to say that the low fever was undoubtedly typhus. My mother nursed her eldest son, and the invalid met with all conceivable kindness from his Vicar and others in Buckingham.

*To his brother*
August 10 / 55 Buckingham

My health is one of gradual amelioration, though at intervals I take a step back, Do you know anyone going straight to Paris, who will carry a letter to Sainte Beuve and a copy of *Iphigenia*? That he may appreciate and translate; and would not Paris rise en masse to welcome Rachel as Electra? What a part for her! They have no *Iphigenia* that I know of – that's the mischief - in any case the play ought to go to Paris - the Parisian public is not quite as barbarous as the British. - It is a pleasant dream to conceive Paris revenging me on guilty barbarous London - but such dreams even should have been long ago resigned by me.
Archer.

On August 11 Archer wrote

Today I have actually driven out: Humphreys came in his gig - the sun was shining, only a little drive to see the cricketers - it appeared impossible but I did it. I seemed to enjoy my drive - the sky looked so blue, the trees were so green, some bright, some sombre, the grass was so lovely, the fields looked so gay. It was a resurrection. But here I am back again in my own quiet room - tired.

My mother wrote at this time anxiously about her eldest son, who however very gradually gained strength, As soon as she could, she got him away for change of air, and on the 22nd of August, mother and son started for the Continent, travelling by slow stages to Baden Baden. On the day that Archer left England he placed in my hands the M.S. just written, of the 2nd and enlarged edition of *The Transcendentalists*.
He had written to me as follows on August 18 / 55

> Shout Io Poean, shout - Huzza, huzza, huzzoo! I have completed the *Transcendentalists*, and am wild for its publication. Will it not, must it not, fall in with the feelings of thousands? But to succeed it must come out at once while Maud is still fresh - in the next ten days. Bosworth I suppose must publish. And a yellow cover like Thackeray's. It must take, I am confident. And if it did, then *Iphigenia, Songs of the Present*, all would sell - fortune would be conquered. It is worth the trial. Here I am hoping again - it seems wonderful - but I do - I do. So people must be angry about *Maud* - still more puzzled. May Heaven prosper our endeavour.
> Archer.

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I may mention that these hopes were no more realised than others which had gone before. The enlarged edition of *The Transcendentalists* produced in critical circles not so much momentary disturbance as is caused by the flinging of a stone into a stagnant pool. The Invalid returned to England on the 6th of September, sound in mind and body, and resumed his work at Buckingham. The following letter will show how he enjoyed Baden.

> *To his brother.*
> Baden Baden.
> 27 Aug. / 55

We find Baden very pleasant. I am writing a long letter to Grillparzer, telling him how greatly I admire him. I shall keep a copy to show you. The air is so pure here were it not for the smoking, the mountains look so green - the whole place is delightful. Poetising is impossible. One is all day at the Salon de Conversation. The bands play charmingly - only not enough at a time. Molique leads in the evening, and Arian plays the Cornet a Pistou, better we think than König. In the evening yesterday, despite its being Sunday, we went to hear Molique's band, which played exquisitely, and happened to sit next to Marie Cabel, now here, who kept singing all the time. Baden is sweet.
Archer.

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*To his brother.*
Sept. 21 / 55 Buckingham

I have been reading *My Novel* after all. It is very affected, and indeed replete with sillinesses, yet in parts it amuses me. It is just the book to amaze and awe: stagey, forced, unnatural, pedantic, constantly downright silly; but great knowledge of society is displayed, and there is much pleasant writing, - and virtuous intention , - only here, if ever, is the place to say

'Man fühlt die Absicht, und Man ist verstimmt.'
A.G.

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*To the same.*
OCT. 29th / 55 Buckingham

I see my way, more and more, you will be glad to learn, to an ultimately satisfactory arrangement of *Songs of Early Summer*. What will impose upon this false - false age it is always very difficult to say, but I hope against hope. Altogether I am pleased with the form the whole collection is assuming, and delude myself into the idea that it may win a hearing.

Such an Article I have just read in the new *Edinburgh* on Maud! One could gnash one's teeth only where were the use? Tennyson's great forte - a flooding to the writer - is of course his lyrical ease and freedom, only to be attained by dint of those profound studies of which his earlier poems show such proof. In *Maud* we have wild, yet exquisitely tender melody. The love passages are the sweetest in any language. 'Maud, Maud, Maud' &c. is exquisite 'In among the lilies' - you know. The subject indeed is morbid, - but the treatment masterly, and wonderfully natural. With all this the writer says some true things, which is just the mischief, As Geibel says:

> Would you know why this book excites my ire?
> Just because there is some truth in it;
> If 'twere only trash, 'twould not vex me a minute;
> Then 'twere food for the worms, now 'tis coal for the fire.

It is just the Article to take people in - having a show of shallow wisdom about it. He finds (does the Reviewer) the finest of all Tennyson's productions to be - 'Break, break, break' - lines, which if one had written, one would literally be ashamed to publish, - and the moonshiny 'tears, idle tears' from the *Princess*. The truth is, I cannot write ill enough, falsely enough, artificially enough, detestably enough, for this thrice and tenfold accursed generation. Then Tennyson is praised of course for being mystic and unintelligible in his religion: The

writer actually says: ‘It is a great proof of the depth, sincereity, and simplicity of a man’s faith, when each sect of religion claims him as its own!’ What say you to that for a nineteenth century sentiment? He quotes the affected ‘I have led her home’ - as verses, which for grace and tenderness he can compare to nothing in modern art, except one or two of Mendelsohn’s best *Songs without words*. And yet this very writer catching a kind of side glimpse of his own silliness, says, after abusing critics for being morbid in their demands, and creating morbidness in poets – ‘It is not impossible, that were any of the great masterpieces of the world to appear for the first time now, they would do so in the face of an inveterate and stupid opposition from cultivated readers.’ Truly I know this by sad experience, I who have given an *Iphigenia at Delphi* to the world, not to say a *King Charles I* and have seen them fall lifeless from the press. - Not long ago I was reading my own *Spring*. How charming it is, how fresh, how natural, without, I am the first to admit, the minute correctness of Tennyson, the exceeding happiness of his phrases and epithets. - It really makes one desperate at times, and one is always afraid of doing something very foolish in a moment of indignation, to mask one’s disgust for such a generation. Well, I have hewed them hip and thigh, for that matter: but what of that - when they don’t know it? Hang em! You see I am not growing milder. After all we won’t despair.
Archer’

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*To the same.*
Novr. 1 / 55 Buckingham

Such an amusing article in the *Quarterly* - at least it made me laugh a good deal - on Sewell’s Sermons to the boys at Radley. Sewell is an extraordinary mixture of folly and genius - his principles admirable, -

but a deplorable lack of the ballast of commonsense! He mentions in the regular Sunday sermons, that 'the boys' dinners are usually excellent - and of the best and purest quality!' (The note of admiration is Mr Sewell's), 'but that they are sometimes ill cooked;' for which the preacher apologises in the service for the 2nd S, in Advent This is good fooling. He also threatens the boys from the pulpit with the iron rod, and talks about the cubicles – 'cubicula'!

I have a book to read called '*The Jubilee Year*', consisting of Missionary poems, containing four or five of Sewell's that are really fine, - spirited, heart-stirring, fraught with noble generous animation, and not devoid of happy imagery and choice phrases. Some things by Mrs Alexander are sweet, and Coxe the American, and Bishop Doane (another Yankee) are pleasing contributors. 'Scene in an Emigrant Ship' of Sewell's is so good I wish I had written it for my 'Ballads and Romances.'

There is another nice article enough in *the Quarterly* on *The Newcomers*, praising it up to the skies, but not a whit too much, yet scarcely showing great discrimination. The critic is of opinion that Laura, whom I confess I admire very heartily, and am disposed, like Pendennis, <u>to love up to</u>, though of course she has her little failings, - is pragmatical and prudish, and that Pen's praises of her are disagreeable, - in which view I cannot sympathise. Altogether however the article is very pleasant reading, and the extracts are always delightful
Archer.

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*To the same*
*Criticism in Athenaeum*
Nov. 5 / 55 Buckingham

Yesterday came an Athenaeum, with a sapient notice of *Iphigenia at Delphi*. Hear, hear, O hear!

~~(I can but quote the glorious conclusion in part). 'Mr Gurney has availed himself of the sketch projected by Goethe himself, and elaborated it with exceeding care and no little skill. Nor is the entire work without a certain beauty both in conception and in execution, but it reads more like a translation than an original; so much has the habit of referring to models fettered the mind and repressed the poet's enthusiasm of the author. The merits of the poem &c.'~~

> 'We close with some remarks on a tragedy by the Rev. Archer Gurney, entitled *Iphigenia at Delphi* (Longman & co). Mr Gurney is favorably known by a verse translation of the 2nd Part of Goethe's *Faust*. He has a habit of initiating the cold classic style of his master. His faculty of reverence is large, and his idolatory of the sage of Weimar excessive. He thinks the *Iphigenia in Tauris* of the latter superior to the corresponding tragedy of Euripides, and, in completing the eulogy, professes to follow the German in preference to the Grecian poet. He has indeed availed himself of the sketch projected by Goethe himself in the 'Italian Dome-Day', and elaborates it with exceeding care and no little skill. Nor is the entire work without a certain beauty both in conception and in execution; but it reads more like a translation than an original, so much has the habit of transferring to models fettered the mind and repressed the poetic enthusiasm of the author. The merits of the poem are minute; and the whole, while evincing the presence of much taste, <u>is chiefly remarkable for the entire absence of genius</u>. Such are the anomalies of intellect. In some cases a species of talent is superinduced by education, which has no root in the ground of nature, being thrown

over the mind as a foreign ornament and not covering it as a native growth.'

Is not this sublime? It worth framing as a full-blown criticism of the day. After all, I must have Geibel's famous Sonnet (fully half my own) in *Songs of Early Summer*, beginning:-

Poet or Artist, howsoe'er attire thee
Art's royal robe, heed not the world's loud cries,
That favours garish mediocrities:
True taste and feeling only <u>can</u> admire thee &c.

Archer

The latter end of the year 1855 witnessed the publication of Archer Gurney's *Ode of Peace*, of which more in the next chapter.

# Chapter XXXI
# Supplementary Correspondence. Grillparzer. Tennyson. Cobden. The Ode of Peace
# 1855

*Translation of Archer Gurney's letter to Grillparzer written from Baden Baden in August 1855*

Dear and honored Herr von Grillparzer,

Probably you have long forgotten a young Englishman, who, some 16 or 17 years ago, troubled you oft-times by his visits and sought again and yet again to express to you his admiration of your master works. This same Englishman, who may now perhaps venture to call himself a poet, though not a fashionable poet, takes this opportunity of addressing you, being once more on the Continent for a fortnight after an absence of some years, and most cordially assuring you that his early admiration has but increased with time. - My German is perhaps a little, or even very rusty: as for German characters I scarcely know how to trace them: but, worthy Sir, you know not what real pleasure it gives me to lay my sincere homage at your feet. I became a clergyman some six years ago, but have not resigned on that account the office of poet: indeed it seems to me that all that is really beautiful must contribute to the benefit of Christianity as of Christians. I must avow further that I am as stiffly orthodox as in those days when you once told me - 'There were no believers left - people only believed that they believed.' Might Heaven so order it that you might think otherwise at present: But, even in any case, I venture to indulge the hope that we may meet in a happier sphere - since it is my conviction at the least that you have ever laboured for the good of your fellow creatures, even as you have

resolutely opposed yourself to the vulgar and silly spirit of your Age. Like you, dear Sir, I love true liberty and true progress; but I know that to be worthy of liberty folks must honor woman, and the weak, and rule themselves. Shouting will never help men to the goal. But I would not tire you with sermonising. It may even seem forward to have said so much: but something you will I hope forgive to the Englishman, and to the Anglican priest. Three of your great dramas, *Sappho*, *The Dream of Life*, *Woe to the Liar*, have been translated by me, but not yet published: I have sought only to draw the attention of my compatriots to your genius in reviews &c. But these good folk are just now the victims of a certain transcendental frenzy - that is to say the critics are, and the simpleminded easygoing public is led by the nose - a frenzy as detestable and ludicrous as your German Heine-and-Gutzkow mania. When I remember that the rubbish of this latter Israelite gentleman wins vast applause in all your German theatres, while *Woe to the Liar* - but what is the use of words? - Schiller has borne one faithful testimony: 'The Gods themselves contend in vain with dullness.' (Mit der Dummheit u.s.w.) Our comfort must be,

The false is ever fugitive;
The everlasting heav'ns remain.

I imagine that the Gutzkow rage is already on the decline, and that other make-believes have taken his place. Pardon this frank tone, dear Sir. To whom should I venture to confess what I think, and feel) if not to the first of all living dramatic poets, - one of the first assuredly of all lands and all ages? You know this quite as well as I; and yet I trust it may not offend you to hear as much from a loving foreigner, who has to discharge a vast debt of gratitude. So pure, so lofty an enjoyment, as your dramatic works have yielded me, I know not elsewhere how to seek or find. At an early hour you made your election not to count on

the applause of the mob, I mean the cultivated literary mob, of critics and delettants; to resist the unreasonable, lawless, well nigh brutal democracy of the moment. Believe that I speak with the voice of posterity when I say, that one only, the boundless thinker, the all-sided Shakespeare, can claim priority, - precedence of your genius. Nor is this to say very much. We have no second dramatic poet who could be at all named with you. The others in the days of Queen Bess are only magnificent savages. Our best dramatists, perhaps, are the still living Sheridan Knowles and Robert Browning, the latter probably unknown to you, and yet I should say the greater of the two, only that he sacrifices most things to effect. With a Grillparzer he must not be ranked. The Italians have only their stiff Alficeri. Racine and Corneille among the French have their merits; but their most famous tragedies are but military evolutions or reviews compared with your 'chef d'oeuvres', which hurry us into the thickest fray of life, and then again lead us to the border of true content and peace. Again you would not rank the gay or sombre particoloured childishnesses of a Victor Hugo with *The Golden Fleece* or *The Waves of Love and Ocean.* Cameron is a splendid artificial blossom or hothouse plant at best; true nature, passion, real beauty, truth of feeling, and knowledge of character, are entirely wanting to him. There remain only your own great countrypeople, as I may well call them, Goethe and Schiller, and I must venture to hold you a far nobler dramatist than either of these. Of your lyrical productions I know little: what I have seen seemed to possess an incomparable grace of their own. But very likely you will say, 'This is not a little daring of my Englishman to venture to bestow such praises on me!.' Yes, dear Sir, I fear I was always a little daring, in the days when I used to tease you so, and endeavour to coax you to my dear father's house (he has since left this world of pain) - but let the daring Englishman say his say once for ever - if your patience hold so long. It does seem to me then that Goethe possessed no true dramatic genius.

He was rather a lyric bard, and his lyrics would be absolutely charming (they are very pretty) if they did not constantly sin against propriety, and so against true art. He was a man of mighty powers; nothing that he undertook could wholly fail. And he has dramatic moments in *Faust*, in *Egmont*, in *Gotz*, and most of all in Aldergo? His *Iphigenia* is very beautiful also, though it be the beauty of statuary: the fifth Act is really magnificent. I may perhaps mention here that the last work published of my own (excepting a satire called *The Transcendentalists*) was an *Iphigenia at Delphi*. You may remember perhaps that Goethe suggested the main idea of such a piece, a noble one, in his *Italian Journey*. It need not be said that much was necessary by way of addition to form a complete work: I do venture to hope that this tragedy, in course of time, may meet with some degree of recognition. To return to Goethe, his *Tasso* is classically rounded, wellnigh perfect, scarcely dramatic. A certain 'ennui' too seems to me to brood over most of his pieces: there is no proper progress of the action. To enjoy them it is needful to have a decided faith. Therefore can they never please young folks. Yet more, a certain childishness - forgive the word, - a childish, not a childlike tendency, I must constantly recognise, or think I do, in Goethe, the more remarkable considering what man of the world he was thought to be. In his critical observations this is surely manifest; but not only there, not only in a silly piece such as *Stella*, even in his *Wilhelm Meister* it seems necessary to pass rapidly from admiration to astonishment, sometimes wellnigh to compassion. Can you pardon me for saying, we Englishmen often feel something of this kind in reading German poets. A Grillparzer indeed is beyond the imputation of the childish or ignoble. In your works I find the highest art united with the expression of the deepest passion, and again a grace which seems to me the peculiar want of almost all your countrymen. I except some few, especially perhaps a Geibel, possibly not so pleasing to you, whose *Songs of June* seem to me both sensible and poetical, healthful and

graceful. But to continue my censures - is not our dear good Schiller broad, and rather swollen? Is he not a professor? Is he not a little of a bore? I do not wish to rob him of his dues (who could?) though unable to delight in orator Posa, or to take the shilly shally Wailenstein for a hero, I at least acknowledge *The Bride of Messina* for a wonderful production, which I should place indeed in the same category with your masterpieces. True, it is dull in parts, and the moral is bad, a contrast to your *Ancestress* in that respect - but the choruses are assuredly magnificent, and the whole is inspiring, wellnigh bewildering (hinreissend), full of fiery life. But *William Tell* seems to me - the William Tell which August v. Schlegel thinks so glorious (may I say as much?) Schiller's very worst production, without any real interest, stupid, tedious, fragmentary, wholly undramatic, bass in the character of Tell, disgusting revolting in the murder of Gessler. Altogether Schiller seems to me, I own, rather slow. His language is often noble, the verses have a grand sound. Goethe said of Schiller that 'he left the Vulgar behind him which enchains all others,' (he might, I think, have spoken for himself,) and this is true perhaps in some respects: but he certainly did not leave the Commonplace behind him, and he treats everything with equal importance be it of interest or no. I could not muster courage or patience to translate one of his dramas: it seems hard work enough to read him. I fancy I may have drained the juice in my early days and left only the dregs behind. Goethe gives me pleasure still, I can return to some of his works often; far oftener however, if the truth is to be total, to a Grillparzer's.

And now permit me, dear good Sir, to whom I owe so much high pleasure, to make a clean breast of it once in a way. Least then among all your works do I esteem *The Ancestress*, and yet even this is already an artistic whole. For the moral nothing assuredly need be added to your own admirable preface. Some of the poetry is charming, but the

subject seems to me too fearful, too horrible. Precisely on that account did it captivate the German public. - What a vast advance is already perceptible in your *Sappho*! Here is a masterwork of which even Byron said 'The world must learn to name its poet.' Who ever painted a woman in the autumn of life under such circumstances so as to command admiration before? Ah, what do not the women of Germany owe you! You alone have defended the sex's rights, and thereby won the hatred of most German men. The sweet graceful tender Melitta, what a contrast to the sublime Sappho and yet both command our sympathy alike. Goethe and Schiller did not this. Only the highest genius could reach such a goal. Then *The Golden Fleece* - *The Argonauts* - how terribly beautiful, perhaps too terrible and yet scarcely: all is purified and softened by so lofty an art that the terrible at last enchants. Nothing do I know anywhere more exquisite than the Second Act of *Medea* - the mild and tender and yet at bottom selfish Creusa, - Jason, that model of the Age's youth, the glorious Medea herself. Reading this one feels what child's play were the Greek tragedies, titanic child's play doubtless, but still child's play: think of Euripides' Medea by the side of yours. I can never forget the first impression wrought on me by this mighty work when yet a boy. And how far otherwise, fares it here with Schiller's chef d'oeuvres. As my taste has formed itself your mighty masterpiece has only commanded my more earnest homage. What fearful truth, tempered by what wondrous grace. Up to the rim of the volcano flowers are blooming, breezes dancing. Next in order comes *King Ottocar* - drawn with what force, what reality. This Bohemian, this Hungarian woman, the proud valiant childish frantic poetical heroical Slavonian, Ottocar, - the honest firm resolute courageous German Rudolph - these are all living human creatures, not figures, painted on a wall. Let no one expect phrases - but they will not seek in vain, if they have eyes to see, dramatic fire and deep meaning. But perhaps I like better *The faithful Vassal of his Lord*.

What a blow on the face did you deal therewith to the mean selfish twaddling race about you. And when I say this, dear Sir, do not think I abuse the Germans only. Everywhere, alas, the taste of the public seems grievously depraved. The true and the beautiful are not in request, only the novel and bizarre. My own landsfolk are just as crazed, especially in poetry: nature and art are alike cast away on them. To please, things must be must be artificial, not artistic: the essential is that wonders should be shammed, and nothing felt. The fashionable reigning Tennyson has just published a really horrible absurdity called *Maud*, which has been received of course with raptures. Before this he had published much that was very beautiful, only always too laboured, lacking in impulse. But for *A faithful Vassal* - to choose an old bureaucrat half laughable for your hero, and him interest, make him command our sympathies, our inspiration, because he is faithful honest and true - this is indeed the sorcery of genius! Of one thing only would I complain in this tragedy. It is too real. The cruel persecutor is too cruel, not for nature - but his conduct pains us, and the poor young wife has too much to bear - you let us have too clear a glimpse of the night side of our common nature. - Highest of all your works I must rate the three delightful masterpieces which you gave us - ah, that I am obliged to say it, in the last place, - *The Dream a Life, The Waves of Love and Ocean,* and *Woe to the Liar.* The first is the most exquisite of legends. The lyric poetry is really enchanting, fraught with most exquisite grace: the opening is fresh as Spring, the action is almost too exciting, the close is full of peace. What truth! What a void charm of poesy! Honestly I know of nothing more perfect of its kind, unless perhaps it be *The Waves of Love and Ocean,* which I have read, I know not how many times, ever with fresh delight and admiration. I may not detail the beauties of this masterpiece. Grace, depth of thought, happy freshness, wealth of poetry, expression of sweetest passion, blend here to constitute what seems to me perfection; and then these distinct

characters - this noble Hero - this romantic Leander his saucy friend, the father, the mother, the priest, Ianthe, all how complete, how masterly. - And last, *Woe to the Liar,* of all your works to me personally the most delightful; this Leon, this Edrita, the noble-hearted Bishop, the Savage chieftain (how should a public comprehend all this which admired *Uriel Acosta*?) - what exquisite pleasure did it give me to translate this charming comedy, which for grace and sweetness can only be compared to some of Shakespeare's happiest, such perhaps as *As You Like It*.

Dear Herr von Grillparzer, I wished to express my sincere homage; perhaps I have only written a somewhat impertinent letter, that may displease you - If I know your address I should be happy to send you my attempts on my return: but this much I must venture to assert in every case, of this much I have already assured my countrymen, - that you are one of the greatest and noblest poets of all ages, of all countries. May I venture to complain here at the close of my scrawl, that your Lyrical Poems have not yet seen the light in a collected form. For years I have been asking for them - hitherto in vain. Pray, dear good Herr von Grillparzer, let us have these speedily! I remain only a few days here - a letter will then find me at Buckingham in England. And so I will only go on to subscribe myself

Yours deeply grateful loving and sincere admirer
Archer Gurney.

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Whenever Archer Gurney's translations of Grillparzer's plays may be published, I could wish that the above letter might serve for preface, together perhaps with Grillparzer's reply. The reply tarried, but it came at last. Archer sent it to me with these few lines.

*To his brother.*
Dec 1st 1855 Buckingham

At last I have a letter from Grillparzer, which I send you. It is a very pleasant one and characteristic also. The main point is to know that I have really given him pleasure, as I wished to do. Touching is the one cry, wrung from him, where he says, 'Ich bin in meinem Vaterlande halb vergessen, übertroffen aber nicht erreicht' - that is, passed on the road to fame by his inferiors. I send you a translation as you may have some difficulty in decyphering the original. I shall not write again Vienna-ward for some time, save perhaps to Betty Paoli, if I do not soon hear from her.
Archer.

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Translation (by Archer) of Grillparzer's letter to him.

Vienna the 26 Nov. 1855

Honored Sir' (Verehrter Herr) equivalent to 'My dear Sir'
If I did not at once answer your first friendly letter, this was owing principally to the fact, (setting aside the sad condition of my eyes, still much affected, - ) that although I well remembered your pleasant personality (liebens - würdige Persönlichkeit,) I did not know you by your name, and so was constrained to await the return of our common friend, Betty Paoli, to learn which of the three or four young Englishmen, whose acquaintance I made much in the same manner, and a right to the name of Gurney. I know this now, and rejoice that it should be just you who bear it.

Your letter then has given me great pleasure. (Ihr Brief also hat mir grosse Freüde gemacht -). Not because you praise me; for strange, especially too lofty praise, is apt to awaken self criticism, which is often bitterer than unjust censure: but your judgement so entirely coincides with the point I had aimed at in all instances, that I could in any case rejoice in having been thoroughly understood. That a son of free England should be gratified by my *'Faithful Servant of his Lord'* - which our German - alas! lovers of liberty (eheu! Freiheit's männer,) were shocked by, - that he alone should recognise that this tragedy was not slavish vassalage, but fidelity to a given assurance, fidelity to duty, - and again that you should do justice to *King Ottocar*, though celebrating the rise of that Hapsburg dynasty, to which, with the rest of your countrymen, you are probably not attached, - these are manifestly the views of a lover of art (Künst ansichten) and these, my dear Sir, gratify me far more than the praise.

Again, in your other literary judgments I can almost entirely coincide. Thus I too think that dramatically *Clavigo* is the best of Goethe's plays, though of course others far exceed it in poetic value. Only on Schiller you seem a little hard. To speak in strictest confidence however, he is not very near to my heart, though I labour to place him as high as possible, first as a representative of enthusiasm in our cold fishy Yankeelike era, and again, because if we had to give him up, we Germans should have nothing left. In any case, the merit pertains to him of having modified the dramatic forms of Shakespeare so as to adapt them to the needs of the age.

The literature of our own day is at ebbtide (liegt im Argen) – even in England I imagine. But your countrypeople seem to know this, and wait patiently for something better, filling up the time as best they may. Our Germans on the other hand make an uproar about progress at every step

they take backwards; in their conceit they dream that they have reached the acme of perfection, and not to be disturbed in this sweet delusion, they strive to put down everything which could at all disturb their sense of superiority. Hence am I also put down. I am half forgotten in my native country, and passed by, though not yet equalled. (In diesem Züstand der Erniedrigung lebe ich auch. Ich bin halb vergessen in meinem Vaterlande, und üertroffen ohne erreicht zu seine).

But now for yourself, dear Sir. You have devoted yourself, it seems to literature - which might have been expected from the noble tendencies of your early youth. You will not blame me for not being acquainted with your works: I live much out of the world and see few books, scarcely any reviews, my eyes will not allow me to read small print: but from your early endeavours and present views in art I can only augur most favorably of the value of your works. My nearer acquaintance with these, situated as I now am, must be left, I fear, to the chapter of accidents.

You are also a clergyman, and orthodox in your convictions. I can understand how one might be a clergyman in your Church, not having to resign all natural interests and sympathies to serve at the altar of the Lord. Orthodoxy too I can understand in your Church. Reason, which in the gravest matters, would waver in eternal doubt seizes some superhuman truths, which steady the mind, and for which no substitutes could be discovered. But our Catholicism demands too much. Instead of leading reason further when it fails, it narrows its operations when most needful. You write that I once said ‘People believe only they believe’: I might as well have said of our times, ‘They believe that they do not believe.’ God has taken care that man should be unable to escape him. (Gott hat dafür gesorgt dass man Ihm nirgends ausweichen kann).

And so fare you well, and may you be happy. If the decyphering of my letter costs you pain, ascribe this to the badness of my sight, which makes not only writing but reading very difficult to me.

Our Betty Paoli will write to you herself. For the moment she sends you her most friendly greetings.

Yours sincere Friend (Ihr freündschaftlich ergebener)
Grillparzer.

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*To his brother.*
Dec. 4. 1855 Buckingham

I have written a long letter to Betty Paoli and despatched it, begging her to say many things on my behalf to Grillparzer whom I did not wish to trouble with another letter just at present. I shall, however, please God, in course of time return to the attack, and try to express my reverence for the achievements of this mighty poet genius. Meanwhile I tell Betty Paoli and his Viennese friends to guard him as the apple of their eye, their greatest noblest and most immortal bard. She will probably shew my letter to many others and it may do something to awaken feelings of love regret and reverence.
Archer.

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In the autumn of 1855 my brother's conviction became more and more strong that the war with Russia in the Crimea had been carried far enough, and great was his indignation with that portion of our press which clamoured for further hostilities.

*To his brother.*
*Cobden and the Crimean War*
Nov 6. 1855 Buckingham

Have you seen Cobden's admirable letter, smiting popular folly in the face? I shall love the man ever after. This is a manly tone indeed: all honor to the politician who in this emasculated age can deliver his soul so freely! Did you see the poor reply of the *Times*? Thus writes Richard: 'Can there be found one commanding intellect now employed (unless under the shield of an anonymous irresponsibility) that is inciting the country to a perseverance in the war?' Ponder this! Thus does he deal with the invertebrate action of Tennyson – 'There are minds so wanting in moral continence that they abandon themselves to every popular emotion or frenzy of the hour - who now that the demon of carnage has sway for a season sing of 'the canker of peace' , and who would be ready to mop and mow with madmen tomorrow if Bedlam could be but one day in the ascendant!.' He continues in a strain of lofty indignation: 'Such are they who ask us to believe (I omit much) that there (in the Crimea) is the school to unlearn selfishness, and to train us to the disinterested love of our species! We are asked to believe these things: yes, when we are prepared to pronounce the New Testament a fable, and Christ's teaching an untruth, we will believe them: and not till then!' - Is not this 'like a Roman'? I grant that there might be a fatal necessity of repressing Russia in the first instance, - of shewing her that she was really powerless against the West. Well, that is done: her fleets are destroyed, her greatest fortress is annihilated, in a twelvemonth she has lost 300,000 men: she is defeated! What more do we want? Our interest as a nation, is to make peace as speedily as possible, on terms that are not humiliating to Russia.
Archer.

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The above letter of Archer's was forwarded by me, without leave asked or obtained from the writer, to Mr Cobden, and elicited the following amusing reply.

*To the Rev. Augustus W. Gurney*
Midhurst Novr 10, 1855.

Dear Sir
Pray accept my thanks for your note, and the enclosed from your brother, which however has this great disadvantage in my eyes that I have not after much pains been able to thoroughly master its contents owing to the peculiarity of the handwriting. After more practice, I should discover the key and be able to I dare say to read it more easily. However I am bound to add that he is by no means the worst penman I have encountered, for I have specimens of correspondence where after reverting to all Sidney Smith's expedients of trying, upside down, right to left, and with and without spectacles, I have not been able to read a word, - and they are lying over for some Layard or Robinson to dig up their contents. I can read your brother's letter sufficiently to see that he expresses friendly sympathy for my views and conduct in connection with this wretched war; and I hope you will do me the favour to tell him how much I appreciate his approving comments on my letter - all the more flattering that they were not intended to be seen by me. I am happy to add that a very great number of similar communications have reached me from all parts of the Kingdom, thus showing that there is not quite so great a unanimity for the war as its advocates would have us believe.
Very sincerely Yours
R. Cobden.

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*To his brother*
Novr. 9. 1855 Buckingham

I do not at all disapprove, though I am a little surprised by your overtures to 'Richard Cobden' on my behalf. Well and good. So let it be! I
have abused him heartily, when he was acting the part of a mischievous demagogue. I am ready to admire him, now that he is doing his duty, though of course I can't agree with what I believe to be his doctrine - under all circumstances 'Peace a-tout prix.' That I think is not reasonable. Our Lord said, 'He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one' - Thereby justifying war, just war, for evermore. The Ode you speak of might be very grand I confess it - but I doubt the inspiration firing me.
Archer.

———

I had suggested to my brother that he should write an *Ode of Peace*, and after brief demur he took up the idea hotly and carried it out in a tornado.

*To his brother*
*The Ode of Peace*
Nov. 12, 1855 Buckingham

Here is a Draft of the Ode you demanded. Don't expect wonders! Wellnigh impossibilities had to be reconciled therein. Your scheme had too much of the pathetic: the appeal must be to reason, and O! how vain is that appeal. The task is to convince a nation it is in the wrong and without that irritating it. Ah, it is doubtless ill performed. But this is the first Draft only, - though copied oft thus grandly from an almost

undecypherable M.S. noted down at intervals yesterday and today. I fear it may disappoint you grievously. And in truth it ought to be very grand there is no doubt of it - and yet matter of fact and sensible too. Here are 236 lines. In Tennyson's Ode on the Duke's Death there are 253. Probably mine will yet wax a little. It has not I imagine the point and telling power of his - neither is the subject heartstirring and concentrated for Englishmen.
Archer.

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*To the same*
*The Ode of Peace*
Nov 16, 1855 Buckingham

Do not be excited about the Ode, for the chances are greatly against its winning an audience. One thing is certain. It must come out at once, if it is to succeed. Let us pause for no more cobbling, And don't wish to cram everything it might be possible to say, into it. Details are not for verse. The main thing is to excite a wish for peace, a wish to spare Russia, a secret dread of France. The rest will follow. Leave our statesmen to settle particulars. No preface, no dedication. And at once!
Archer.
P.S.
What I hope most from is the rather 'baroque' - out of the way in rhythms in the opening strain, and the passage describing the expectations of the war-party:-
Still higher, ever higher
The surges of carnage sweep &c.

On the 30 Novr. the first printed copy of the *Ode of Peace* reached me.

To the same
The Ode of Peace
Dec. 3, 1855 Buckingham

I have 6 copies of the Ode, admire the cover exceedingly, and see only one comma for a full stop in the whole, - no other error. It reads to me I must confess (in the centre) too prosaically, I was so anxious to meet objections. However the beginning and the close may bring it off.
Archer.

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From Alfred Tennyson to Archer Gurney.
Dec. 6. 1855

Dear Sir

In consequence many thanks I have this morning received your Ode. Many thanks for what (though perhaps here and there I might suggest an alteration, as to inversions for instance which though made use of by poets of the highest name, are never pleasing to me) for what appears to me well executed, noble in sentiment and rolling in sound. Long ago I ought to have thanked you for much that was well-done and to be admired in another volume of yours, but when it reached me I did not know who was the author - nor for long after, for I see no literary people here and scarce ever a review: and when I did learn, it seemed so ungracefully late to acknowledge it that I let it be, not to mention that my desire so to do was a little chilled by the recollection of a very angry letter you had written me years ago. And now let me take this occasion of writing to you to express my sorrow that anything like a tiff has passed between us. I wrote to you a little curt note (as I generally to friends write as curtly as may be, hating letter writing) certainly not

intending to be ironical, but expressing a simple truth; it seems to me that you took it as ironical: one cannot always measure the effect of our own written words on the mind of the reader; the tone, the glance of the eye, the good-humoured smile are wanting. It was some time after this, when I was in the Scotch Highlands - I had not acknowledged so soon as I ought to have done the receipt of your Spring - and you wrote me so angry a letter that I could not answer it, for it made me angry too. Surely I too believe that Love is the great law of the world and would fain neither be bitter with any man nor have any man bitter with me for want of a little explanation.

‘The noblest strife is Love’s.’

Now let me confess to you a sin which I have sinned against you, and do you grant me your forgiveness. Shortly after the publication of Maud I received a most bitter anonymous letter accompanied by a printed abusive notice out of some paper, and signed ‘Yours with aversion.’ A strange fancy came into my head that possibly you might be author of it, but after reading your Ode I feel quite convinced that I wronged you greatly, though but by a fancy. ‘Cursed is he that smiteth his neighbour secretly.’ I am sure you are not he and as I am remorseful for having imagined so, do you as good man and Iltian priest grant me absolution.

So I have sung my palinode; and now I wish to say one word about Maud which you and others so strangely misinterpret. I have had Peace party papers sent to me claiming me as being on their side because I had put the cry for war into the mouth of a madman. Surely that is not half so wrong a criticism as some I have seen. Strictly speaking I do not see how from the poem I could be pronounced with certainty either peaceman or war man. I wonder that you and others did not find out

that all along the man was intended to have an hereditary vein of insanity and that he falls foul on the swindling, on the time, because he feels that his father has been killed by the work of the lie, and that all through he fears the coming madness. How could you or anyone suppose that if I had to speak in my own person my own opinion of this war or war generally, I should have spoken with so little moderation. The whole was intended to be a new form of dramatic composition. I took a man constitutionally diseased and dipt him into the circumstances of the time and took him out on fire. I shall show this better in a 2nd edition and shall be happy if you will accept a copy from me and judge it more leniently, and take it as a proof that if there were any little shadow of a quarrel between us, we have shaken hands.
Yours truly
A. Tennyson

I do not mean to say that my madman does not speak truths too: witness this extract from the letter of an enlightened German, quoted in one of our papers about the state of England, and then think if he is all so wrong when he calls our peace a war, and worse in some respects than an open civil war - ‘Every day a murder or two or three - every day a wife beaten to death by her husband - every day a father or mother starving their children, or pinching, knocking and kicking them into a state of torture and living putrefaction.’ Then he asks, ‘Has this always been so? or is it so only of late?.’

Is not the true war that of evil and good?’

———

Archer Gurney to Alfred Tennyson
Buckingham Dec. 8, 1885

Dear Sir

Very glad was I to get your letter. (I start with an inversion you will say.) - Very likely I have behaved foolishly in feeling anger at what seemed contemptuous silence, with reference to Spring. Now, remember that my mind was exacerbated by the coolness of critics, who at once numbered me among the ignominious Many, and in fact treated me as scarcely worthy mention. I was prepared for much since mine was not the style in vogue, scarcely for this. Your silence was the last drop in the cup. It aggravated me to folly, I dare say, and I wrote a passionate letter, which like most creations of mere impulse, ought to have been consigned to the fire. But it was sent, and not unnaturally aroused your wrath in your turn. In as far as I may have accused you therein of any other than perfectly honorable motives, I beg to recall that epistle, and to trust it may be cancelled, be as though it had not been. I have then no absolution to bestow, for silence could scarcely be a grave offence, and you have now explained that happily. And so no more of it. Pardon me in your turn: but that I think you have already done.

Now for Maud. My dear Sir, you do not quite appreciate or I should rather say discern my real feeling in this matter. I never identified you with your hero; but it seemed to me to come to the same thing practically. Is or is there not a melancholy tendency to excess and exaggeration in modern literature, especially in the service of the Muses? Call into Court Balder, Alexander Smith, Fetus, &c. Does not Art need to be guarded against the encroachment of a novel barbarism, which would substitute profusion of language for wealth of thought, - extravagance for strength? I know this to my cost, and cannot pretend not to be influenced in part by personal feeling, though the interests of Art are also dear to me.

Now Beauty of every kind (pardon me for speaking frankly) has always seemed to me the object of your worship: Truth for Beauty's sake; falsehood also at times perhaps for Beauty's sake; and so you have now taken this morbid hysterical wellnigh frantic tendency and striven to show that this has also a beauty of its own - that fever-ravings can be rational - that hatred, malice scorn, fury, misanthropy, madness - have all a poetical side. - And thereby is it unreasonable to imagine that you may have helped forward the popular current of delusion? The question of peace or war is barely incidental; but you seemed to me to have taken up the theme of war as capable of being treated with more morbid power and passionate bitterness. True, you expressed the same mood of mind before (not uncommon doubtless among educated men just now) in 'Locksley Hall', - but that was one poem, a comparatively short one, among many; antidotes were given with it: and besides it was far more rational; it did not express the views and feelings of a madman. Artistically I must own I like Maud far far less than anything I have ever read of yours. I do not deny that you may have attained what you aimed at - but I think the aim was unlawful, inconsistent with true beauty. Madness can only be admitted as an accident in a true poem, as in Hamlet, - it can never form its staple! The rhythm I must confess is painful to me; in parts Cyclopean, in others artificial - too laboured. In fact the whole seems to me a mistake in Art, and a grave mistake, helping to encourage Balder and his fellows, to foster the notion prevalent among critics that no genius is possible without extravagance, and at the same time deepening the war feeling in the country, the unreasonable craving for tumult and sensation of some kind which is a part of the very sickness of the Century.

I have written, and looked forward to publishing in March (in a volume of poems entitled Songs of Early Summer) 'Maudiana' containing

many better sayings, but none, I honestly believe, not warranted by fact, Some of these however shall be retrenched: remonstrate I must against that seems to me the madness of the hour, but I will strive to remove all unnecessary bitterness.

One thing more I had to say - I am desirous that you should possess my most elaborate work, on which I would stake my reputation as a poet, which has been utterly ignored, or dismissed with a few words of quiet commonplace, by our enlightened Press: the Athenaeum said, in a notice characteristic of the prevailing tone of mind, that though it had a certain innate beauty in its way, it was totally devoid of any trace, of genius. This is my Iphigenia at Delphi. You will be kind enough perhaps to let me transmit a copy to your publisher, as I do not know your own address, - and I need not add that any observations of yours would be very welcome.

I have spoken harshly of Maud, - I confess on that subject I feel strongly. But will you not make some allowance for the feelings of a man who finds himself denied a hearing, do what he may? There may be unconscious envy in my breast; I scarcely think it, - it has been my delight to convey to other hearts and minds a sense of the exquisite beauty of many of your poems. - But it is hard perhaps to find your image ever interposing betwixt me and the sun, - and an Iphigenia at Delphi dismissed with silence and contempt. I confess I do not quite share your feeling as to inversions. I care more for lyrical impulse and the natural burst of song, which I think necessitate inversions at times - witness Scott, Moore, Byron, the most popular poets of past times. Once more many thanks; pardon my frankness; I am not the less sincerely a lover of your more genial strains.
Yours very truly,
Archer Gurney.

I have omitted to say that I know nothing whatever of any anonymous letter. I hate anonymity - I had a beautiful letter from Grillparzer one of the greatest dramatists of all time, the other day, bearing on our controversy.

———

I quote two or three passages from the Ode of Peace which their author thought least badly of. Here are the opening lines.

I
A vague vast wail is swelling
From the giant orient clime,
And the hoary Year is knelling
Its dirge on the harp of time:
Is the symphony sublime
Of war, agony, and crime?
To the fiends of carnage yelling
Must our hearts responsive chime?
Shall we carol in prose and rhyme,
And boast as our age's prime
That the hordes by the Dnieper dwelling
Melt thence like the sun-smote rime?
Is this what our babes are spelling,
That War is the true sublime?

Here is a picture of Russian untiring valour.

XVIII
A voice in mine ears is ringing
Like the wind on a boundless plain,
When eve is her cold shades flinging;

Yet it seems not to complain;
‘Tis a nation voice is singing,
And this is the low dull strain.
‘Whelm may this ominous night,
Perish both hope and delight.
Never will darkness affright.
Wonder’s inscrutable pall
Over us, deluge-like, fall!
Peril’d, yea, lost be our all!
Victory none may control;
Droops not the resolute soul;
Calmly our death-cry shall roll:
Earth be the tomb where we lie;
Over us mourn shall the Sky;
Proudly, for Russia, we die.
From the child to the mother clinging
With love’s convulsive strain,
From woman, from age, seems ringing
This cry of a grave disdain:
‘Tis a nation’s voice is singing:
Shall it speak to our hearts in vain?

And here is a thought for England.

XXIV

Even while my hand the impassion’d lyre is waking
What vague vast murmurs permeate the spheres!
What countless mothers’ hearts perchance are breaking,
That mourn the darlings of their autumn years!
What countless cheeks is spring-tide’s glow forsaking

Beneath the spell of all too desperate fears!
Yea, at this moment burst what stifling tears!
If Right command, then list we no appeal.
God's Right must case the tenderest heart in steel.
Whate'er the cost, we dare not pause to feel.
But be we sure! for dread were passion's reign
We cannot call ye back, O generous train!
Not one young gallant life may wake again. -
Or must we list to that tumultuous voice
That bide in Battle's symphony rejoice?

This leads up to what the War-party say.

XXV

Still higher, ever higher,
The surges of carnage sweep:
Rolls not the battle nigher?
Then we unmoved may sleep;
Shame's infamy brand the flyer,
And let the nations weep!
The billows of blood shall leap
O'er this Czar in his Kremlin-keep,
Till he and his myriads creep
The harvest of shame to reap.
Prate not of pity's call!
Comes not an hour for all.
Let us crush this Northern giant
Who held the East in thrall!
Call not the Cross divine:
What need we heed the sign?

As dear is the stormy Crescent
To the raging battle-line.
Three hundred thousand men
We have stricken by field and fen,
Nor will we pause from carnage
Till the hecatomb's piled again.
We have crushed her boasted fleet,
And we view her at our feet,
And will tread on her giant carcase
Till she yields us homage meet.
Then down with the craven few
That dream of a vengeance due!
That bid us beware
Of some unknown snare
When the nations shall laugh at our own despair!
'Tis an idle dread:
Let the dead be dead!
The red sun of battle glares overhead,
And wisely our oracles have said:
Still higher, ever higher,
These surges of carnage sweep:
Yet rolls not the battle nigher,
So we unmoved may sleep;
Shame's infamy brands the flyer,
And let the nations weep!'

———

Much of Archer Gurney's correspondence in 1855 was concerned with his forthcoming Songs of Early Summer, but for this no room can be found here and now.

# Chapter XXXII
# Iphigenia At Delphi
# 1855

I am about to set forth, to the best of my poor abilities, what I hold to be the extraordinary merits of *Iphigenia at Delphi*. For once I shall not give a silent vote: that is, I shall not content myself with signalling beauties without passing comment. Why should I not speak out? Is there not a cause? True, I may be partial, but I will face that risk. When *Iphigenia at Delphi* was published the critics were what they were. The public never gained access to the book. Mine at the least are deep convictions; and, if that were of any use, from a child I have loved literature - and have been intimate with the best models. Nor do I stand alone in my high appreciation of the tragedy. Private friends are enthusiastic. Then see the opinion of the Messrs Longmans' reader (Chapter XXX). See also the following letter.

*From William Howitt to Archer Gurney*
The Hermitage
Highgate Rise
Oct. 8. 1855

Dear Sir
A short absence in France has prevented me sooner thanking you for your kind present of your 'Iphigenia in Delphi', which we have read with very great pleasure. The Drama, however, though Greek in subject is wholly Christian in spirit. It breathes an excellent philosophy of humanity far beyond Euripides. The character of Iphigenia is truly noble, and far exceeds in tenderness as well as breadth of human sympathy the Iphigenia of Goethe. I do not know what Goethe meant to

do with Iphigenia in Delphi, for he closes, to my conception, the grand interest of the drama in Tauris, where Orestes is freed from his phrenzy and Iphigenia returns with him and Pylades home. Yours, therefore, seems to me to embody the same action as Goethe only in a different place, the cure of Orestes being placed by you in Delphi and not in Tauris. The vision of Crete in which he sees his mother is a genuinely Christian vision, which no Greek poet could have conceived - it does not belong to the spirit of their mythology, - and it is infinitely finer than anything in the drama by Goethe. Many thanks for your kind invitation, which I should be happy to avail myself of, did I come your way: and wishing you all success, I remain
Dear Sir, Yours faithfully,
William Howitt.

———

William Howitt does not make it a reproach, though others did so, that *Iphigenia at Delphi* is at once Greek in subject and Christian in treatment, at once classical and romantic. What is it that gives their special glory to Grillparzer's master-pieces, *Sappho* and *Waves of love and Ocean*, if it be not this?

*Antecedent action to Iphigenia at Delphi*

When a human sacrifice, the costliest and rarest, had been declared essential by the augurs to the success of the Trojan war, Agamemnon, most unlike in this to a father, in pride of heart, or if you please in nobility of spirit, consented to the death of his youngest daughter Iphigenia - hereby incurring the unmeasured wrath and ~~boundless~~ contempt of her mother Clytemnestra. The Goddess Diana, having rescued the ~~child maid~~ child and carried her to Tauris, Iphigenia there long held high office in Diana's Temple. But this rescue remained unknown to all. For the world Iphigenia had perished.

Clytemnestra avenged her child's supposed death upon the absent Agamemnon by adulterous intercourse with Aegisthus; and on her husband's return aided and abetted Aegisthus in murdering him. For this double crime of adultery and murder her son Orestes, being urged on by his sister Electra, slew his mother and her base lover with the self-same axe which had slain his father, and thenceforth became a prey to the furies of remorse. Orestes, as a last resource, having consulted the oracle in the Temple of Apollo at Delphi as to how he might be freed from anguish, was instructed that all would be well if he were to bring to Delphi the sister who unwillingly abode at Tauris, Orestes concluded that by 'the sister' must be meant the statue of the Goddess Diana, sister to Apollo, shined in the Taurian Temple; and with Pylades his friend, and a chosen band of followers, he set sail for Tauris. There he found and recognised his own lost sister Iphigenia, who had gained but did not reciprocate the love of Thoas, King of the country. Very nobly Iphigenia told Thoas all, and the barbarian King no less nobly allowed Iphigenia to set sail for Greece with her brother and his friend. Meanwhile Electra ~~tarried in~~ had come to the Temple ~~at~~ in Delphi, and shrouding herself from all men's observation - since she was there surrounded by members of the family of Aegisthus, enemies to her race - awaited the return of the heroes from Tauris with the statue of the Goddess Diana, amid mingled hope and fear.

The unities of time and place and action are strictly preserved. The scene throughout the tragedy is the Hall of the Temple of Delphi with the statue of the God Apollo above the altar in the background. If my quotations are to be understood it be well that I preface each act by a brief argument.

*Argument of Act I*

Electra whilst awaiting In the Temple of Delphi the return of Orestes and Pylades from Tauris with the statue of the Goddess Diana, lays up before

Apollo's shrine the fatal axe which has twice become the instrument of murder; and, in so doing, is overcome by mysterious dread lest a third stroke of the axe should prove - if that could be - yet more unhallowed. She is interrupted by the entrance of worshippers, but lingers on the chance of gaining tidings of the absent heroes. Nor does she linger in vain. Myron, a follower of her brother Orestes, who has just landed from Tauris alone in safety, offers thanks to Apollo for his own life whilst deploring the sacrifice - as he supposes - by the priestess of the land of his leaders and companions on the distant Taurian shore. Myron declares to Electra that he beheld his companions led forth to slaughter. Being asked what the Taurian priestess was like, Myron describes a being altogether glorious, and Electra - who lives thenceforth for vengeance - passionately devotes this glorious being to a just destruction by and through the very axe which she has ~~just an hour before~~ laid up before the shrine. At this juncture the Priest of Apollo demands that all retire in deference to an ancient custom which claims temporary sole possession of the Temple-courts for a deeply, stricken penitent unnamed - no other than Orestes, who, accompanied by Iphigenia, and preceded by Pylades, approaches the Temple as Electra goes to prepare for her terrible Taurian enterprise.

———

How full of grand things *Iphigenia at Delphi* is, the following quotations may serve to prove. That youth of genius which I have attempted to describe in this *Memoir* was not to fade into nothingness, though truly, after rising to a poetic climax, it was slowly and gradually to give up the vain contest with adversity.

Take, in Electra's opening soliloquy of *Act I*,

> Orestes, O my brother, I inspired
> The deed, yet thou alone hast borne its burden, -

Hast paid its penalty. Whence such partition
Of earthly woes? I would share all with thee:
Is it the act alone Heaven's wrath arouses?
Do thought, design, and word, and will pass free?
Me did a weary silent grief possess,
Which missed the mother; long unkind, ungenerous,
But still the mother, dear from childhood's hour;
Whose voice was sweetest far of mortal voices,
A magical cadence of delight possessing,
Whose touch was sacred, when she smoothed our tresses,
Whose eyes seemed founts of love, intense, serene.
But thee the Furies of Remorse assaulted &c.

Surely this whole passage must live.

Then in the same noble soliloquy, at page 4.

O, axe, I shudder now, thine edge beholding,
As wert thou to some terrible deed predestined,
Woe wrought by me. Inspired by fate, by vengeance,
This woman's aim might raise, might immolate -
Horrible fancy, wherefore dost thou haunt me?
O Goddess pure, Diana, thou, whose image
My brother seeks on Tauris' shore, within
Thine own blest shrine to rear, swift speed him hither!
His arm and heart heroic must prevail.
In vain would the barbarian guard the treasure,
In vain would waves and winds the vessel stay:
The godlike triumphs; blasphemy were doubt.

Then on pages 6 and 7 Myron's speech.

Apollo, list my sacrifice of praise
Me hast thou rescued from the hideous slaughter;
The costly perished, and the vile remains.
Yet to himself is each the nearest ever,
And life is sweet to all of mortal kind &c.

Is not this Greek, and yet universal also?

Then Electra's speech, before she has heard the evil tidings.

My hero-brother, should not messengers
Announce thee? Surely; Gods have heralds ever;
Aurora flies before the Delphian's ear.
O, pour thy joyful tidings on my ear!
Say, Myron, he hath burst all bonds opposing?
- Yea, from his childhood, matchless was Orestes,
The golden boy, who first knew care through me. &c.

Electra is slow to believe the worst. How fine on Page 9 is her

Danger steels the hero's breast.
and
Olympians &c.

So again her outburst.

Your envy triumphs, Gods! Me shall ye bend not &c.

Then in Myron's speech when bidden by Electra to recount the voyage to Tauris,

How danced the azure waves beneath our vessel,

As jubilant in their burden! How the stars
Seem'd, for these heroes' sake, to brighten cheerily!
Ere long that land is gain'd; a stern grave shore ,
Where pine-tree forests gloom'd in sable majesty
Above the steep white cliffs; where seem'd the winds
To wail the fortunes black and rites obscure
Of that barbaric race.

All this and more that I do not quote seems to me picturesque and noble without straining.

Then on Page 15 Electra says

The savage prey with beasts, being coarse as they,
This Thoas and his tribe, as brutes irrational,
Rouse not my anger; but, this maid revered!
She could have tamed the tiger's heart to sympathy;
Her sullen pride forbad.

x x

And could she look in those fresh eyes heroic,
And mark that springtide brow, and raise the axe,
And cleave that neck of snow-white regal majesty?
It is too much. Each fibre of my frame
Thrills with fierce hate against pride's impious votaress.
What aspect bears she, the detested one?
Then Myron's noble speech

Fair seem'd she, then: yea goddess-like. Deep calm,
Heroic sorrow on her brow sat graven;

Her eyne like azure midnight heav'ns, which depth
Beyond blue depth unfold, until the gazer,
Lost in the infinite, self-knowledge falling,
His eyes must lower to live to earth again.
Her very tresses, long and golden, charm
The hearts of men to wondering awe. Forgive,
If praise Offend thee: I but once beheld her,
And to my latest hour must honour thus.

*Electra*
Seems she all mildness? This predestined being
That slew Orestes? Slept not fire repress'd
Within?
Gleam'd there no token of the pride that wrought
Such woe?

*Myron*
Yes, those blue eyes might lightenings fulminate;
Like summer skies. For empire seem'd she born:
Meseem'd that nothing earthly could resist her.

*Electra*
Brave axe! 'Tis well, we have a worthy foe.
Hear thou, O Father Jove: List, bright Apollo!
Hear, all ye conclave of the Deities!
For though I love ye not, I not deny ye, -
I will revenge Orestes.

More I might specify even in this first Act; but, after all, extracts do little justice. ~~It is~~ The sustained dignity and grandeur combined with nature are the crown of the work.

*Argument of Act II*

Pylades enters the Temple, bearing a palm branch, so insuring solitude for the victim to remorse whom he precedes, and in his soliloquy tells us of his brotherly love for Orestes and his lover-like devotion to Iphigenia. As the brother and sister appear he welcomes them. Orestes is storm-shaken by the furies, and retires to the inner sanctuary, there, if it may be, to win release from anguish. There now ensues from Pylades a declaration of his love, which only elicits from Iphigenia the statement that they are parted alike by fate and duty, and Pylades withdraws to keep watch by his stricken friend. Hereupon enters Evadne, sent by her mistress Electra to ask who the strangers are, and to solicit an interview with Iphigenia, from whom in her deep grief she hopes to derive comfort. Iphigenia, mindful of the many foes to her race who dwell at Delphi, guards her own incognito and that of her brother and his friend, but assents to an interview with Electra, whom she knows not as Electra but only as a mourner needing consolation. She even conceives that this may prove to be Antiope, Aegisthus' sister, nevertheless she will see her, although her spirit is oppressed by an unaccountable foreboding of evil.

———

In *Act 2* the opening soliloquy of Pylades is surely very charming.

> From childhood have I prized my friend as life
> His was the ampler nature, - deeper,
> Mine was an April morning, faint, if fair;
> But he, in boyhood even, with me contrasted,
> Seemed noon majestic, fraught with summer splendours,
> Whose very tempest-moods of wrath inspire.
> What have I not endured with thee, Orestes?

For thee, through thee, my dear, dear friend and brother?
Again
The sister brings he, by the Gods demanded;
Not the dead statue, but the living soul, -
Noblest of woman-kind, Iphigenia.
She dwelt within her Taurian sanctuary,
Unwilling. Her deliverance sought the God.
That Gods should love and serve her, who may wonder?
Iphigenia, glorious sacred name!

x x x

Thou art the sacred night, more blest than day,
Deep, deeply azure, lit with magical starbeams
That thrall the spirit in a blest captivity,
Which doubts if most it love or most revere.
O glorious maid, on my young being's river,
The rapid lightsome streams, thine orb looks down;
And all the waves, that prattled erst so thoughtlessly,
And later murmured notes of querulous sorrow,
Now breathe one long low chant of love and praise.

x x x

Like some grave mystic star, whose rays have power
To calm and heal and bless, thou glidest by me;
The sight discerns thee, and the soul desires thee:
Thine is communion with the Gods; then flyest.

x x x

As eagle could I soar, if bathed I in
Thy rays of light: for who can feel thus fervently
Hath needs capacity of might within him.
False visions! Heart, thy worship and thy longings
Shall never lift a glow-worm to a star.

Every one of these passages seems to me masterly: many of them exquisite. Then comes a grand colloquy between Iphigenia Orestes and Pylades, but lack of space compels me to pass it by. Iphigenia, when seeking to console her brother, has just said to him

Thou, best-loved Orestes,
May'st well aspire to win divine regard.
One deadliest deed was thine: but for the great
And pure and glorious beats thy heart. The sun
Beams on the sunlike.

Then comes the ~~splendid~~ burst of Orestes

I have slain our mother!
I have slain our mother! Hear'st thou, O, my sister?
Urge not to silence, though the terrible sound
Should waken Orcus' wildest echoes, nay,
As thunder roll, which hopes prayers my hope to pierce not,
Still let that hideous deed confront the day,
With dread assurance of abiding horror,
And conscience shriek, - Accurst the matricide!

And the grander reply of Iphigenia

Gaze we not backward;
The past is too fatal, - all too drear;

And over such abyss, the sad soul, straining,
Loses its selfpoised balance, whirling wildly,
The sport of Chaos, plunged in the inane.

And now we come to the first love-scene between Pylades and Iphigenia, open to criticism and yet beautiful. Pylades says

The godlike here on earth, midst mortals tarrying,
Must mortals dare to court.

x x x

The stern barbarian
Who willed our death, thy heavenly voice subdued him.
Of our bold aims forwarned, each forest-pass
His grim guards held; then, rage his soul inspiring,
He came to seek thee whom he deemed his enemy,
From whom he ween'd to list deception's accents;
But thou, by thine own godlike will illuminate,
Well knowing, in the rudest heart, some chord.
Responds to greatness, thou to him didst breathe
The straight plain truth, - our names, our race, our purposes
And thy design with us to cross the main;
Thyself and us alike entrusting to
His consciousness of right; and savage Thoas,
Stern and indomitable, bent beneath
That heav'nly yoke, and spared the Grecian captives.

x x x

O'er this tale

Why should I linger, dear and conquering maid?
In part, because the memory of thy glory
Doth yield me joy: I love of thee to speak,
Thine every word and deed; and thus I prelude, too,
The wild avowal which scarce gain utterance,
And yet which must be breathed.

Again the lover says

Why on thy glorious features, on thy brow
Aerial, on thy mystic azure eyne
Set they perfection's seal, the Gods, if thou
Be doomed to death in life?

Then after making avowal of his love

O, restless heart of passion:
In other hours had this sufficed to gladden;
But love by nought save love appeared can be.

Then Iphigenia's noble reply.

Thou feel'st the good in others' souls so keenly
That thou thine own peculiar claims resign'st;
And thus did'st thou co-equal might subordinate,
So that the world scarce knows thee as thyself,
But only as Orestes' Pylades.
Almost for this I chide thee; yet how blest
Is friendship! Union of two kindred natures,
Alliance of frank spirits, bold and free,
Blest mountain-streams, that hurl the rocks before them,
Yet kiss the blossoms into fresher life,

And reach, unsullied, Fame's wide-rolling ocean.

Pylades says

For thee, with thee, believe it,
I could be great; I know myself through thee.

Iphigenia replies

Twain passless barriers part us: Fate and Duty &c.

Every word tells, and grandly.

Then, in the scene between Evadne and Iphigenia, Evadne asks

Who are ye, godlike strangers?

Surely Iphigenia's is a Greek answer

This suffice;
Thou know'st remorse and silence oft agree.

Greek also seems to me this further line of Iphigenia's, in answer to Evadne's persistent enquiry as to whether she has ~~encountered~~ learnt aught of Orestes and Pylades,

Much mortals bear, and heros known must be.

In reply to Evadne's prayer that an interview may be granted to her afflicted mistress, Iphigenia answers

To the Ione mourner
I never yet refused the healing boon
Of sympathy, and dare not now. O, maiden,
I wait thy mistress, if she wills to seek me.

The act closes - for I may not linger - with Iphigenia's expectation of the coming of Evadne's mistress, ~~whom~~ (Electra), a mourner needing consolation.

*Iphigenia*

Hist, footsteps; - she approaches, this strange mourner;
But, whosoe'er, she shall not prove unwelcome;
For from this vain self-commune shall she wake me.
Methinks a cold foreboding thrills this spirit
Of some approaching doom. Soul, arm thee, rouse thee, And bear thy lot, foreseal'd, with equalmind!
The Gods forsake not who themselves desert not.

*Argument of Act 3*

The Act opens with an interview between the sisters, Electra and Iphigenia, who meet and part unconscious of sisterhood. Electra, pleads the sacred cause of vengeance, and Iphigenia calms her sister's fierce though generous spirit with her noble counsels, and, as a stranger, wins her love and trust. Electra resigns her life's one terrible purpose on condition of Iphigenia's consecrating her to the office of Diana's priestess. ~~Electra~~ She goes to prepare for consecration, and all is peace, when Myron enters, ~~He sees~~ and recognises in Iphigenia the Taurian priestess. He would at once denounce her, but her superior genius imposes on him trust and silence. Notwithstanding this, an unguarded exclamation of Myron's goes far

towards betraying the truth to Evadne, who, doubting, yet not daring to incur the responsibility of silence, resolves to impart her suspicions to Electra.

x x x

In *Act 3* the opening colloquy between the sisters is surely exquisitely beautiful. How well are the characters contrasted!

Electra says

> Thou know'st man's heart
> Hopes against hope; say rather, 'gainst despair;
> And thus the midnight, which my spirit shrouded, Was strangely lit by passing spectral-gleam.
> On thee, through thee, - a voice within me spake Unreasoning, - I might haply gain the goal.
> Then admiration of thy spirit's calm
> And tenderest majesty constrained my wonder
> That thou should'st need to work atonement here,
> Thou mystic maid, for aught misdeed, soul-injury;
> That such mild azure should be flecked with thunder-cloud.

Iphigenia's answer seems to me beautiful.

> To me a lonely fate
> The Gods awarded: mighty perilous deeds
> And giddy raptures never fired my spirit;
> But gaudiest light with deepest shade must alternate;
> A long dull twilight rarely woos the tempest.

Then the next speech of Electra's is one of the finest of all.

Ah, happy thou! The Past can nought restore.
O image of the calm and pure, mild stranger,
Thine aspect, breathing peace, yet conscious power,
A royal unpretending magnanimity,
Thrills and attracts this more impulsive nature;
Like to a holy shadow, now, meseems,
Thou fall'st athwart my path of glaring day.

x x x

But I do feel, as though my passionate being
On thine could rest, as on some column's base
In the God's temple, which unmoved remains,
Where chants resound, and incense soars to heaven.

Is there anything finer of its kind?

Then on Page 50 Electra's speech.

Yea, vengeance yields a stern delight to Gods,
And men, when righteous rage inspires them. She
Who wrought this deed, within her forest sanctuary,
Even now mayhap conceives, with dread mysterious,
Foreboding of the recompence to come.
For soul with soul may thus communion gain,
In hate as love, far, far o'er earth and ocean.
Exult with me, if that thy soul be noble,
That this accurséd one should perish.

Then Iphigenia's beautiful speech

Guilt ever reaps its penalty in woe.
For thee, - O blame not, if I seem to chide thee,
Or read a lesson old, yet ever new, -
('Tis not strange truths our spirits need to leaven them,
But fresh heart-knowledge of our childhood's lore),
So ponder, - woman nature was not moulded
For passions stern and fierce; her pliant frame
Should yield ensample to her soul of grace,
Of all-controlling charity: I'll teach thee,
If thou wilt learn, the grace of resignation,
To woman's highest goal &c. &c. &c.

x x x

Blind are the instincts of the brute-creation,
But man hath freedom; and where power for ill
Besides, just self-control was ne'er denied him.
For thee - I how not wherefore - deep my heart
Seems heaving; I, methinks, could love, could treasure thee.
Great must thou be, for nature's royal work
Her birthright owns; O, be thou great in goodness.
Thou scorn'st me not? Even tears? Ye, Gods, be praised!

Then Electra's yielding

The clouds around my being melt to air,
So wondrously thy magic voice hath stirred me;
My bosom beats with love to thine responsive;
The tears thou well'st of start and fall.

x x x

Wonders, which all the lightnings of the Gods
Had wrought not, have thy soft low accents ministered,
And I resign the purpose of a life,
Will yield the guilty to the Immortals' thunderbolts,
Will seek to make that woman-nature mine,
Of which I feel the beauty and the tenderness.

Then on P.55

One little hour this heart hath new-created;
Meseems, I wake upon a world unknown.

This chapter of memoir would swell beyond reasonable bounds were I not to leave many a beauty unquoted. The rest of the colloquy between the sisters is all grand, all equally well sustained, but here and now my word must be taken for the fact.

Then comes a soliloquy of Iphigenia's, which though not among the finest things, is yet fine. It shows Iphigenia loving, but preserves her dignity.

Probe not thine heart too deeply:
Ask not what it were agony to know.

x x x

Oh, should'st thou sinful fondness entertain,
(And when we prize the beauteous, hard it is
To bound our admiration,) then, be sure,

Is retribution near. Thou pluck'st one flower:
Lo, crags are loosed, and downward rolls the mountain.
(*Her eyes have fallen upon the axe.*)
Ah, shadowy horrors!
- I will not yield to such unnatural portents:
For it befits not Agamemnon's child
To fear the mystic spell of gloomiest powers,
Which common souls might bend beneath their empiry.
Ah, stedfast courage, earth and heaven encountering,
With no mad arrogant rage, but will resigned
Is found alone in duty, so itself
This heart be true: then fear I nought without me
Thou, Pylades,
Alone canst awe, canst awe because thou lov'st me.

x x x

When for grave cause the Gods would work us misery
Their course is secret as secure their aim;
We may not track the lightning till it crushes.

Then on Page 62 Myron's speech.

She stood upon that savage death-fraight soil,
Within the pinebound forests, like a star
Dim mists of midnight cleaving; such strange glory
On that barbaric world seemed she to cast,
Both scene and office gained a rare divinity
As absolute goal of life; in them, in her,
Existence beamed concentred: all away
Was as it were not.

Then the grand scene between Iphigenia and Myron when he has recognised her for the Taurian priestess - fraught with dramatic life and power!

Iphigenia says

O slave, inquire thou not.
There is an hour for silence as for speech.
The Gods through me command thee designation.

Myron threatens that he will denounce the murderess.

Iphigenia makes reply

Thou wilt not speak. Friend, nature doth not delegate
Equality to men: the one commands,
The rude mass follow; just is thine intent,
But I may claim the heritage of sway,
To over-rule thy thoughts for thine own vantage.

x x x

Enough for thee to recognise, - the mortal
Who rushing blindly from his sphere predestinate, Disturbs the secret harmony of nature
Must rest of all men most accurséd.

*Myron*
This soul is freeborn.

*Iphigenia*
Yea, within its sphere;
But when the current flows the wave must follow.

*Myron*
Gods, before men, obedience claim.

*Iphigenia*
Those Gods
Command thee trust, and execute mine orders.
Perchance thou yet shalt live to bless me.

Then the scene between Myron and Evadne.

*Evadne*
Saw'st thou this beauteous stranger?

*Myron*
Mean'st thou her
Of Tauris?

*Evadne*
Tauris? - Tauris, said'st thou? There
Was great Orestes slain, was Pylades –

After this, vainly does Myron strive to allay Evadne's suspicions, and to dissuade her from communicating them to Electra,

*Myron*
Pause, maiden!
The word once spoken ne'er can be recalled,

The dart that leaves the bow must wing its destiny.

*Evadne*
Not for the mistress should the maid decide.

Myron
Whatever love inspires must prove love's duty.

The Act ends with these words of Evadne, who is left alone.

When the tempest crashes,
How should frail reed arrest its torrent streaming?
What must be must be. Gods preserve Electra!
Lo she approaches. O, inspire me, Deities.

———

*Argument of Act 4*

Electra in the veil of dedication hears Evadne ~~tell~~ utter her suspiclons, and treats them as madness, until, Myron being summoned and compelled to admit the identity of Iphigenia with the Taurian priestess, she can no longer question that in Iphigenia she has to do with the detested foe. Then her wrath's the greater for that it had been disarmed. Myron, bitterly repenting his rash speech, warns Iphigenia - but vaguely - of imminent danger. She takes counsel with Pylades who would fain face all foes by her side - but is constrained by duty to return to Orestes, yet even so rests within call should danger threaten. Orestes, mysteriously moved, leaves the sanctuary in order that by his entreaties he may induce Iphigenia to flee. Even as he warns her the furies assail him, and in anguish of spirit he re-enacts the scene of his mother's murder. Pylades bears him to the sanctuary, and Iphigenia kneels before the image of Diana, and breaks into such a Hymn as may become a

believer who yet has small comfort and small hope in the Gods, Myron again urges her to instant flight. So does Evadne in spite of her allegiance to Electra. Iphigenia will not fly, but stedfastly braces her spirit to face her coming doom.

*Act 4* begins worthily with a scene between Electra and Evadne. Evadne, when imparting her suspicions, says

> Unwillingly our souls conceive the terrible,
> Unwillingly reveal.

More grandly does Electra answer

> Suspect the sun that sets behind yon mountains,
> Shall back return, a lurid comet wildly
> To fire the skies, before thou doubt'st my friend.

Evadne goes to summon Myron.

> *Electra (alone)*
> The old man's words return upon me wondrously.
> He said, that she was glorious, calm, and holy;
> He spake of deep blue eyes, of long gold tresses,
> Of self-devotion throned on passionless brow;
> And all, all these x x x x
> O base Electra, dar'st thou list
> To those accurséd promptings?
> Thou wert thou no more Electra.

A highly dramatic scene ensues between Electra and Myron, for which I can find no space. Enough to say that the contrast between Electra's <u>might</u> and

Iphigenia's power is shewn throughout the rapid colloquy,

*Electra*
I have not the foe, and instinct path betrayed me.

The next scene, that between Pylades and Iphigenia, is less striking, yet good also.
Very striking is what Iphigenia says when once more alone.

A mystical feeling of content descends
To bless me. Can it be, as some have fabled,
The Gods with such delusion gladness mock,
Even when they bend to hurl us o'er the precipice?

From Orestes' coming to warn, all is firstrate, and culminates in his tremendous speech. If I can, I will shorten it.

But yonder steel, recumbent on the shrine,
With what keen magic lures it desparete glances?
Cleaves it the Past, the buried Past, to life?
What deed demands it of unnatural horror?
A Mother's sacrifice? O, never more -
Electra, do not urge it, do not sister, -
And shall she ravel with her paramour
Above our Father's grave? - Hark to that laugh,
That insolent laugh, from his vile chamber ringing. –
Together must they sink to soundless shame,
Hurled from the glare of day and light's caresses,
- Aegisthus, murderer, have I found thee? Tremblest thou?
Craven, thine aspect turns my blood to gall:
Perish! - She dares confront me, gaze to gaze,

She flies not shrieks not, tempts the avenging steel –
Know'st thou me, miserable? – Ha!
Thou start'st? turn'st pale? Yea, see thy child, Orestes,
See Agamemnon's child, who vengeance-goaded,
Must speed thy perjured spirit to the shades.
Fall, axe! – Ah's o'er. - No, no, she breathes life's breath,
May yet - who knows - repent that deed of infamy;
Spake she not? Mother? - What thus chills my blood?
What honor quivers through my passionate being?
Mother, speak to me! - She sleeps fast, sleeps silently -
How came this blood upon my hand? O, verily,
This was the hand that once, - 'tis long years since
- A snake had stung me, - she did bind and fondle it
And kiss'd the hand - how came this blood I say?
O hand, caressed so sweetly, nursed so tenderly,
What hast thou wrought? Speak to me!: mother, speak to me!
Ah, she lies calm and still, her weary soul
In sleep hath past to Orcus, blossom-cradled,
Haven'd from touch of harm, or thought of ill;
And strange oblivion shrouds the Present, shrouds
The Past, some childhood's blithsome memories,
From her Orestes. - Said I her Orestes?
Ah, mother,
I Anon thou ne'er can'st bind this hand again.
(*Melts into tears. Then starting*.)
Mount ye, Tartarian forms: Detested foes,
With scorpion goads, again do ye environ me?
Again from your abysmal hollows speeding,
Write ye, like Hydras huge, to crush my frame?
- But who is she that midst your train of horror
Bears aspect mild and feminine, yet sorrowful,

As the dim twilight hour, nor night, nor day?
This way she turns her long veil shrouds her majesty-
It falls - Ha, mother! Art thou come to slay?
Yes, thy hand clasps the dagger, that shall quit thee
On thine inhuman child; but those mute eyes
Smite with a deadlier strike - they crush my heart,
They read my being – Mother! Mother! Mother!
(*Falls in a swoon*)

Then, whilst Orestes is borne to the sanctuary by Pylades, Iphigenia sinks on her knees, and utters the following *Hymn*, surely sublime, every verse.

Fixed on your cloud-thrones, ranged in ether,
Earthly turmoil, ye Gods, surveying,
Grandly, with mute imperial patience,
Smile on this broad scene of carnage and guile!

Earth born passions, like marshlights gleaning,
Fitfully twinkle, then fade, and perish;
Whilst your eternal cerulean sunshine
Basks in a noontide of measureless bliss

Mortal weakess, pity, O changeless ones.
Weight in your balance human madness:
Haply it flies, as the spray from the ocean:
Why should your thunderbolts anthills dismay?

All too petty our earthbound chances,
Follies and passions, to tempt your lightnings; Creatures of clay, we are shadows fleeting;
Ah, be our agonies mortal too!

And after this no anticlimax at the close!

> The viewless train of darkness gather round me:
> Ye spirits of my sires, ye sister-deities,
> I feel your bodiless presence, but I shrink not.
> Me shall ye awe not. Night descends with woe.
> Death comes. I hear his footstep. I am ready.

———

*Argument of Act 5*

The last Act begins with the decisive interview between Electra and Iphigenia. After Iphigenia's admission that she was the Taurian priestess, Electra is about to smite with the axe, but lingers to ask more questions moved by the noble aspect and bearing of her victim. Then slowly the whole glorious truth comes out, and infinite joy and wonder take the place of despair. To crown all, Orestes issues from the sanctuary freed in spirit, nevermore to become a prey to the furies. He relates a vision of his mother who came to pardon. Pylades alone remains unhappy since Iphigenia has stated her resolve to bid farewell to earth's joys for ever. But Electra intervenes and claims that it is for her to do this, not for Iphigenia. And her will prevails.

———

Then for the *5th Act*, I am tired of noting beauties,
The sisters, be it understood, are in converse, and life and death are at issue. Among Electra's powerful utterances are the following:

> Electra
> Know'st thou the countenance of treachery?

She has an open brow, a generous bearing,
And eyes of azure frankness, clear as heaven;
But in her heart lies coiled the hydra pestilence.

Is there a direr woe, - bear witness, Deities!
Than there where blindly we have yielded confidence,
To find the reptile falsehood ambushed lurk?

At last, one kindred spirit hails my heart
In rapturous gladness: absolute is my trust,
Blind my dependence: O, unfathomed woe!
The seeming sister proves the mortal enemy.

Thou saw'st the gulf
Which yawn'd betwixt us, filled with blood, the costliest,
And yet could'st reach a sister's arm across?
Would'st thine above that chasm a bower of roses?

Iphigenia's first reply seems noble,

But no! we may not choose, ourselves, our origin,
And from the rankest evil may blossoms germinate.
I'll trust the inner voice that wills our union,
Rather than memories of our fathers' crimes.

Electra answers

List. There are deeds no tears can wash away;
A loss may gloom which life for life must imprecate.
- O, thou beloved one! Shall thy spirit wail

For ever, unavenged, on Stygian shores?
No, I am arm'd, to yield thee, grace atonement;
I only wait one word to reach my goal.
Wast thou the Priestess of the Taurian Temple?

*Iphigenia*
I was.

x x x x x
x x x x x

Too much of woe my heart hath borne already
To tremble at the touch of vulgar fear;
The immunity of grief is resignation,
Wild challenger of wrath. I know thee not,
Nor yet can conceive the motives of thy passion;
But it suffices that the Gods command;
I would not linger when their summons reaches me.

x x x x x
x x x x x

Life hath to me been weary labour: mazed
In a mute void, nor wholly night nor day,
I wandered long: at last the clouds divided
When most they infinite darkness seem'd to love,
And forth glad sunlight beam'd. Mayhap the Gods
Would thus once surprise me with benignity:
Or, it may be, that, closed my fortune's circle,
They yield the substance of each sorrowful shade,
Predestined early death, twice have the Gods preserved me:
My life is theirs; they best take their own.

x x x x x

x x x x x

This hand and heart alike from blood are free.
Thou canst not doubt me: in the voice of guilt
There is an undertone which grates and hardens us,
And on its countenance a shade is set,
Like gloom, which through forced sunlight breaks to day.
I do not think that thou canst look on me,
And judge me, capable of base denial
Of act this hand hath wrought.

*Electra (After a Iong pause, during which her arms have held the axe uplifted, her eyes fixed on Iphigenia.*
O, fatal miracle!
O, nameless charm! I do not, dare not, doubt thee.
Say, awful stranger, whence this power resistless?

*Iphigenia*
‘Twere thine, ‘twere every noble soul’s, believe,
Thus charged, thus innocent.

*Electra*
Who art thou? Tell me,
For all my rage hath melted into wonder,
And vague surmise of unforeseen discovery

x x x x x

I would hate, - but cherish thee.

*Iphigenia*
O, trust this kindIy influence, heav'n-directed:
I, too attracted feel. My woman's heart,
Long lonely, in thy proud frank generous spirit
A sister mate would seek its griefs to share.
Those tears start forth, which vainly wooed adversity;
I cannot, if I would, resist the call;
I ope mine arms: reject not thou the stranger!

I can seldom read this without being moved, and care not who knows it.

*Iphigenia*
Know then I am - for where fore longer linger
To speak the last, the one decisive word?
I am, new friend, - the lost Iphigenia.

*Electra*
It is no dream: O, infinite felicity!
My sister, my best sister, tenderest sister,
Long lost, long wept, yea mourned through years of gloom,
Dost thou not know me, dost thou ken not me,
Thine own one? thine Electra. - Gods, sustain me!

(*She reclines her head on Iphigenia's bosom. Long Pause*)

More that is beautiful passes between the sisters, but there must be some limit to my quotations.

Pylades comes and announces that it is appointed for Orestes to bear one last hour of trial in solitude - before the end.

*Electra* hereupon exclaims

Dark horror,
Even as thou fled descend'st thou lightning-fooled,
This spirit, scarced with tempests, to dismay?

At length Orestes comes. His speech, which I may only quote in part, is surely true poetry.

*Orestes*
The verdant meads of mother-earth rebloom,
The zephyrs dance, the azure circles over me.
List to the wondrous vision of release.

x x x x
x x x x

Wonder, dearest sisters
Wonder and praise the Immortal's boundless charity!
It was our Mother dawned upon my view;
Our Mother clad in snow-white robes, and starlike
In her first purity, a thing of bliss:
She spake: 'Loved child, not mine the veil to lift
With which the Gods do shroud their grace from mortals,
Lest sight should maze with venturesome security,
Night brings the stars to view, which daylight shun,
The broad expanse, the shoreless infinite.
And death, too, purifies. I erred through passionate love,
Love for a murder'd daughter – thus weened blindness,
And vengeance nerved to crime. Thy desperate sin

Avenged a sire, who haply long forgave,
With whom – But the Immortals close Light's portal.
Go son, resume thy crown, Mycene rule:
Yet hope not spring-tide's halo of felicity.
Oft, while thy jubilant people bless thy sway,
A tender gloom shall shade thy hero-brow,
A calm grave twilight swathe thine innermost spirit.
Yet be thou blest! The mother prophesies
A summer rich, and long calm autumn season,
A life of service, and a death of peace.'
This said, she slowly vanished from my view,
A smile of tenderest joy upon me casting,
That lights eternal sunshine in my breath.

Then it is that Electra claims to abide as priestess in Iphigenia's stead.

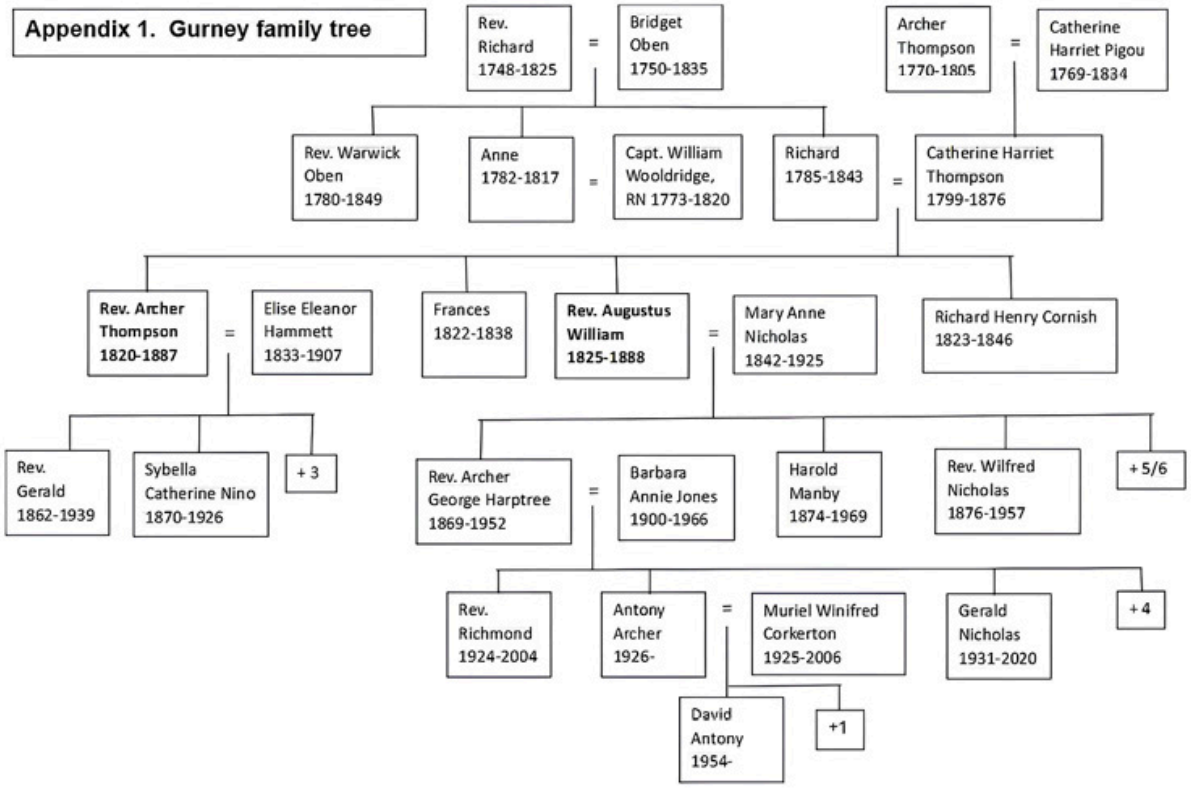
*Electra*
Electra might not bask in sunshine free:
She were a portent of unnatural terror,
The direst, worst, of memories recalling,
Upon the common earth, beneath the skies.
But here, the service of the Immortals tending,
And ministering to human wrong and woe,
A calm grave peace shall bless the wild Electra,
A long gold twilight close her stormy day.
But thou, the darling of all hearts, the treasure
Long lost, late found, the sunshine of our race,
Canst ne'er resist in sullen fortitude
The hearts that rent from thee would pine in gloom
&c. &c.

And Electra prevails.

I am not ~~always~~ satisfied that my quotations are always the best that could be made, but I ask, have they shewn sustained grandeur and beauty? Have I sufficiently avenged my brother on his critics? Here, dear reader, give me leave to rave, ay if you will to blaspheme, for an unguarded moment. The gods of my idolatry are Grillparzer and Shakespeare. Well, I incline to believe that *Iphigenia* is more complete than Grillparzer's *Medea*, which seems to fall off at the close and besides is too grässlich – and has a far nobler subject than his lovely *Waves of Love and Ocean*! And now to turn to Shakespeare. I don't mean to deny question that his plays have extraordinary merits which Archer Gurney's drama lays no claim to: wonderful humour - worldwide power, and knowledge. Yet I dare affirm that for sustained sublimity *Iphigenia* exceeds them all. Take Shakespeare's greatest! They are always incomplete, marred by extravagances, and rarely marked by any sublimity of tone or feeling. If the tragedy has a weak point it is to be found in my opinion in the too persistent love declarations of Pylades. A second edition - never called for - would have resulted, I am confident, in worthy improvements. As it was, the poet did but revise a few single lines. Well might he exclaim, 'Was ever poet treated as I have been treated!.'

**Closing words for *Memoir*.**

It is for posterity to decide whether the neglect which befell Archer Gurney here was deserved or undeserved.




# Appendix 1:
# Gurney Family Tree

# Appendix 2:
# Timeline

Archer's main publications are shown in *italics*.

1820 Archer born 15 July
1825 Augustus Gurney born
1832 At Helston Grammar School
1833 At school on the continent
1836 *Turandot, Princess of China, a drama from the German of Schiller, with alterations*
1838 Working with his father Richard in Vienna
1838 Meeting with Grillparzer
1841 Returned to England
1842 Student of the Middle Temple
1842 *Faust, a Tragedy. Part the Second*
1845 *Love's Legends, poems*
1846 Called to the bar
1846 *King Charles the First, a dramatic poem*
1846 Protectionist candidate for the West Riding by-election
1846 Visit to Wordsworth
1847 Prospective Conservative candidate for the Lambeth constituency at the general election
1849 Ordained curate at Holy Trinity. Exeter
1851 Appointed curate at St Mary's, Crown Street, Soho, London
1853 *Poems, Spring*
1853 *A Satire for the Age, The Transcendentalists*
1854 Senior curate at St Peter and St Paul, Buckingham
1854 *Songs of the Present*

1855 The last year covered by the *Memoir*
1855 *Iphigenia at Delphi, a tragedy*
1856 *Songs of Early Summer*
1858 Appointed Chaplain to the Court Chapel in Paris
1860 Married Elise Eleanor Hammett 18 August
1860 *Poems*
1870 Returned to England
1872 Lecturer, Holy Trinity Church, Westminster
1874 Curate Holy Trinity, Brighton
1874 *Words of Faith and Cheer*
1877 Curate St Andrew's "Iron church", Hastings
1879 Assisted at St Katharine's Hospital, Regent's Park, London
1880 Clerk in Orders and curate in charge, St Clements, Rhayader, Radnorshire
1882 Curate at St Cynydr's church [SS Cynidr and Mary], Llangynidr/Llangunider, Brecon
1883 In retirement in Oxford
1887 Died on 21 March in Bath
1888 Death of Augustus Gurney
1905 Memorial mosaic to Archer installed in the apse of St George's church in Paris, by his family
1907 Death of Elise Eleanor Gurney
1910 Sybella Branford (nee Gurney), Archer's daughter, annotates the *Memoir*
1941 The manuscript is restored to the family
2006 The manuscript is deposited in the British Library

# Appendix 3:
# Archer's Publications

Publications referred to in Chapters 1 to 4 of this volume are also listed in the Bibliography. See also Boase and Courtney 1882.

Archer also published many short papers or poems addressed 'To the editor of *The Spectator*', in *Macmillan's Magazine, The Mirror Monthly Magazine* and the *Fortnightly Review* which are not included here.

* Publication available (2025) as a modern reprint

1836. *Turandot, Princess of China, a tragi-comic drama from the German of Schiller, with considerable alterations and the introduction of new characters with the view of its adaptation to the English stage* (Frankfort)

1842. *Faust: a tragedy. Part the second. Rendered from the German of Goethe* (London).

1843. "Epilogue to the Tragedy of Essex, spoken by Queen Elizabeth (from the German of Goethe"). *The Monthly Magazine* (May 1843), 405-7

1845. *Love's legends. Poems* (London)

1845. *Alboin: a play in 5 acts* (British Library Add. MS 42994 (7))

1846. *King Charles the First: a dramatic poem in five acts* (London) *

1847. *Religion and Poetry, being selections spiritual and moral from the poetical works of the Rev. R. Montgomery* (London)

1848. 'Heaven and Earth, Part the Second, Fragment.' in *The Mirror Monthly Magazine*, July 1848, Vol. 4, Issue 1395, 17-

1849. "Hope's Fools. Ballad Tale from the German of Carl Simrock". *Sharpe's London Journal of Entertainment and Instruction for General Reading*, Vol. IX, 263-4

c. 1850. *Eindruck und Ausdruck. Six German Songs, for Voice and Piano* (London)

1850. *Union and victory: a sermon delivered on Sunday evening, the 24th of November 1850 ... in Trinity Church, Exeter / by the Rev. Archer Gurney, Assistant Curate of Holy Trinity, and Bodleyan lecturer* (Exeter, London)

1850. *The danger and the foe. A sermon delivered on Sunday evening, the 17th of November 1850, in Trinity Church, Exeter, by the Rev. Archer Gurney, Assistant Curate of Holy Trinity, & Bodleyan Lecturer* (Exeter, London)

1852. *King Charles the first: a dramatic poem* (2nd edn) (London)

1852. "Parochial Visitation" in *The English Review* October 1852

1853. *A satire for the age: "the transcendentalists"* (1st edn) (London)

1853. *Poems: Spring* (London) *

1854. *Songs of the Present* (London) *

1855. *Iphigenia at Delphi: a tragedy* (London)

1855. *The Transcendentalists: A satire for the age, in two fyttes of song* (2nd edn) (London) *

1855. *The Ode of Peace* (London) *

1856. *Songs of the Present* (3rd edn) (London)

1856. *Songs of early summer* (London)

1857. "Echoes from the Teuton Forests. I- Uhland". *The Churchman's Companion* vol. XXII, 343-350

1858. *Absolution: its use and abuse; and, Excommunication, or The power of the keys : two sermons / delivered by the Rev. Archer Gurney, on the fourth Sunday after Trinity, June 27, 1858, in the temporary Episcopal Church, 17, Rue de la Madeleine, at Paris* (Oxford, London, Paris)*

1858. "Echoes from the Teuton Forests. II – Karl Simrock". *The Churchman's Companion* vol. XXIII, 34-42

1858. "Echoes from the Teuton Forests. II – Lenau". *The Churchman's Companion* vol. XXIII, 296-306

1858. "Echoes from the Teuton Forests. IV – Tieck". *The Churchman's Companion* vol. XXIV, 332-342

1859. “Echoes from the Teuton Forests. Novalis”. *The Churchman’s Companion* vol. XXV, 183-9

1859. “Echoes from the Teuton Forests. VI – Geibel”. *The Churchman’s Companion* vol. XXVI, 273-280

1860. “Echoes from the Teuton Forests. VII – Goethe”. *The Churchman’s Companion* vol. XXVII, 275-283

1860. “*Eleven songs (seven by Angelina Goetz), with translations of the original German words into English by Archer Gurney*”. *Royal Academy of Music Library*, refs 47.51 Goetz, A., XX (176143.1), XX (176147.1), XX (176200.1) and XX (176283.1)

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- *Lake Lays and Lyrics* (reference in Chapter XXX)
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- Benedict, Jules, 1845 (Ch. XI)
- Browning, Robert, 1846
- Cobden, Richard, 1855 (Ch. XXXI)
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- Gladstone, William Ewart, 1857-77 (*British Library Manuscript Collections*, add mss 44388-44453 passim)
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- Hunt, Leigh, 1830-1857 (*Bryn Mawr College, Adelman Collection. University of Iowa Library*)
- Iddesleigh, Lord (Sir Stafford Northcote)
- Kingsley, Charles, 1854-55 (Ch. XXVIII)
- Lee, P.G (Downside Abbey)
- Liddon, Henry Parry
- Mendelssohn (-Bartholdy), Felix, 1847 (*Oxford, Bodleian Library, M. Deneke Mendelssohn Collection Green Book* XXV.190, XXVI.51)
- Milnes, Richard Monckton, Lord Houghton – undated (*Trinity College Library, Cambridge* HOUG/38/101)
- Napier, William
- Paoli, Betty (born Glück, Barbara)
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- von Döllinger, Ignaz
- Wade, Canon Nugent
- Warren, John Leicester, 3rd Baron de Tabley
- Wilson, John
- Wordsworth, William

# Appendix 5:
# Hymn: Come, Ye Lofty

**Christmas Hymn and Carol**

Come, ye lofty, come ye lowly,
Let your songs of gladness ring.
In a stable lies the Holy,
In a manger rests the King.
See in Mary's arms reposing,
Christ, by highest heaven adored;
Come, your circle round him closing,
Pious hearts that love the Lord.

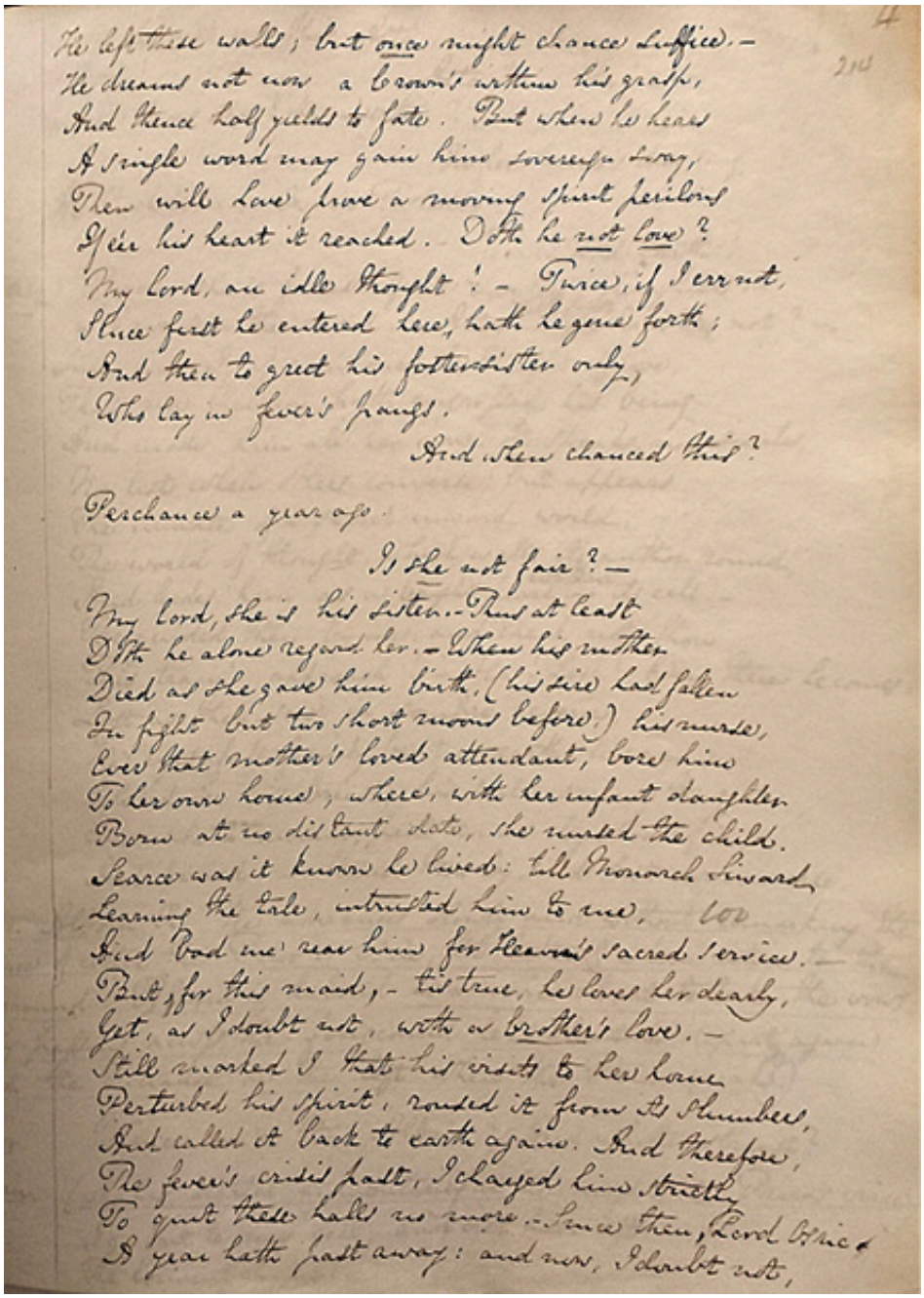
Come, ye poor; no pomp of station
Robes the Child your hearts adore.
He, the Lord of all creation,
Shares your want, is weak and poor.
Oxen, round about behold them,
Rafters naked, cold and bare;
See the shepherds, God has told them,
That the Lord of life lies there.

Come, ye children blithe and merry,
This one Child your model make;
Christmas holly, leaf and berry,
All be prized for his dear sake.
Come, ye gentle hearts and tender,
Come, ye spirits keen and bold;

All in all your homage render,
Weak and mighty, young and old.

High above a star is shining,
And the wise men haste from far.
Come, glad hearts and spirits pining;
‘Tis for you has risen the star.
Let us bring our poor oblations,
Thanks and love and faith and praise;
Come, ye peoples, come ye nations,
All in all your homage raise.

**Archer Gurney 1852**
**Published in at least 42 hymnals**



He left these walls; but once might chance suffice.—
He dreams not now a crown's within his grasp,
And thence half yields to fate. But when he hears
A single word may gain him sovereign sway,
Then will Love prove a moving spirit perilous
O'er his heart it reached. Doth he not love?
My lord, an idle thought! — Twice, if I err not,
Since first he entered here, hath he gone forth;
And then to greet his foster-sister only,
Who lay in fever's pangs.
And when chanced this?
Perchance a year ago.
Is she not fair? —
My lord, she is his sister. — Thus at least
Doth he alone regard her. — When his mother
Died as she gave him birth, (his sire had fallen
In fight but two short moons before,) his nurse,
Even that mother's loved attendant, bore him
To her own home; where, with her infant daughter
Born at no distant date, she nursed the child.
Scarce was it known he lived: till Monarch Edward,
Learning the tale, intrusted him to me,
And bade me rear him for Heaven's sacred service. —
But, for this maid, — 'tis true, he loves her dearly,
Yet, as I doubt not, with a brother's love. —
Still marked I that his visits to her home
Perturbed his spirit, roused it from its slumbers,
And called it back to earth again. And therefore,
The fever's crisis past, I charged him straitly
To quit these halls no more. — Since then, Lord Bishop,
A year hath past away: and now, I doubt not,

# Appendix 6.
# A page in Archer's hand from *Alboin* (British Library Add MS 42994 (7), f. 214)

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